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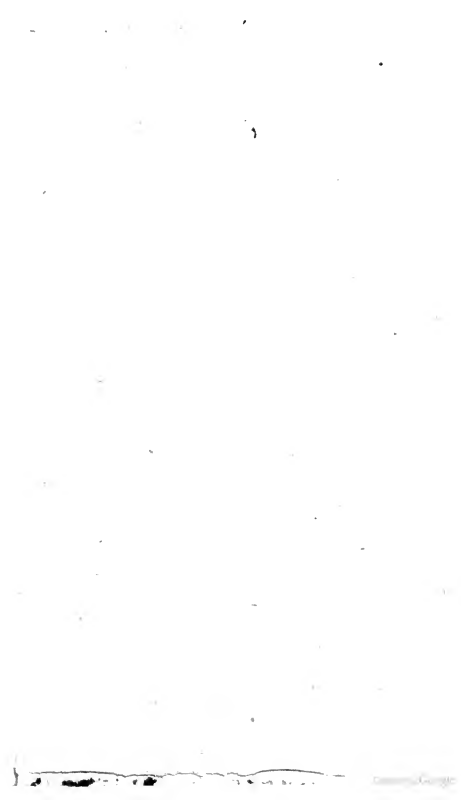
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THE
ODYSSEY
OF
HOMER.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK

By ALEXANDER POPE, Esq.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK I.

The Argument.

Minerva's descent to Ithaca.

THE poem opens within forty-eight days of the arrival of Ulysses in his dominions. He had now remained seven years in the island of Calypso, when the gods, assembled in council, proposed the method of his departure from thence, and his return to his native country. For this purpose it is concluded to send Mercury to Calypso, and Pallas immediately descends to Ithaca. She holds a conference with Telemachus, in the shape of Mentis king of the Taphians; in which she advises him to take a journey in quest of his father Ulysses, to Pylos and Sparta, where Nestor and Menelaus yet reigned; then, after having visibly displayed her divinity, disappears. The suitors of Penelope make great entertainments, and riot in her palace till night. Phemius sings to them the return of the Grecians, till Penelope puts a stop to the song. Some words arise between the suitors and Telemachus, who summons the council to meet the day following.

THE man, for wisdom's various arts renown'd,
Long exercis'd in woes, oh Muse! resound.
Who when his arms had wrought the destin'd fall
Of sacred Troy, and raz'd her heav'n-built wall,
Wand'ring from clime to clime, observant stray'd, 5
Their manners noted, and their states survey'd.

VOL. I.

A

On stormy seas unnumber'd toils he bore,
 Safe with his friends to gain his natal shore :
 Vain toils ! their impious folly dar'd to prey
 On herds devoted to the god of day : 10
 The god vindictive doom'd them never more
 (Ah men unblest'd !) to touch that natal shore.
 Oh snatch some portion of these acts from fate,
 Celestial Muse ! and to our world relate.

Now at ther native realms the Greeks arriv'd ; 15
 All who the wars of ten long years surviv'd,
 And 'scap'd the perils of the gulfy main.
 Ulysses, sole of all the victor train,
 An exile from his dear paternal coast,
 Deplor'd his absent queen, and empire lost. 20
 Calypso in her caves constrain'd his stay,
 With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay :
 In vain—for now the circling years disclose
 The day predestin'd to reward his woes.
 At length his Ithaca is giv'n by fate, 25
 Where yet new labours his arrival wait ;
 At length their rage the hostile pow'rs restrain,
 All but the ruthless monarch of the main.
 But now the god, remote, a heav'nly guest,
 In Ætìhopia grac'd the genial feast, 30
 (A race divided, whom with sloping rays
 The rising and descending sun surveys,)
 There on the world's extremest verge, rever'd
 With hecatombs and pray'r in pomp prefer'd,
 Distant he lay : while in the bright abodes 35
 Of high Olympus, Jove conven'd the gods :
 Th' assembly thus the sire supreme address,
 Ægysthus' fate revolving in his breast,
 Whom young Orestes to the dreary coast
 Of Pluto sent, a blood-polluted ghost. 40

Perverse mankind ! whose wills created free,
 Charge all their woes on absolute decree ;
 All to the dooming gods their guilt translate,
 And follies are miscall'd the crimes of fate.
 When to his lust Ægysthus gave the rein, 45
 Did fate, or we, th' adult'rous act constrain ?
 Did fate, or we, when great Atrides dy'd,
 Urge the bold traitor to the regicide ?

Hermes I sent, while yet his soul remain'd
Sincere from royal blood, and faith profan'd; 50
To warn the wretch, that young Orestes grown
To manly years, should re-assert the throne.
Yet impotent of mind, and uncontroll'd,
He plung'd into the gulf which heav'n foretold.

Here paus'd the god; and pensive thus replies 55
Minerva, graceful with her azure eyes.

O thou! from whom the whole creation springs,
The source of pow'r on earth deriv'd to kings!
His death was equal to the direful deed;
So may the man of blood be doom'd to bleed! 60
But grief and rage alternate wound my breast
For brave Ulysses, still by fate oppress.

Amidst an isle, around whose rocky shore
The forests murmur, and the surges roar,
The blameless hero from his wish'd-for home 65
A goddess guards in her enchanted dome.

(Atlas her sire, to whose far-piercing eye
The wonders of the deep expanded lie;
Th' eternal columns which on earth he rears
End in the starry vault, and prop the spheres.) 70

By his fair daughter is the chief confin'd,
Who soothes to dear delight his anxious mind:
Successless all her soft caresses prove,
To banish from his breast his country's love;
To see the smoke from his lov'd palace rise, 75
While the dire isle in distant prospect lies,
With what contentment could he close his eyes?
And will omnipotence neglect to save

The suff'ring virtue of the wise and brave?
Must he, whose altars on the Phrygian shore 80
With frequent rites, and pure, avow'd thy pow'r,
Be doom'd the worst of human ills to prove,
Unbless'd, abandon'd to the wrath of Jove?

Daughter! what words have pass'd thy lips unweigh'd
(Reply'd the thund'rer to the martial maid;) 85

Deem not unjustly by my doom oppress
Of human race the wisest and the best.
Neptune, by pray'r repentant rarely won,
Afflicts the chief, t' avenge his giant son,

Whose visual orb Ulysses robb'd of light ; 90
 Great Polypheme, of more than mortal might !
 Him young Thoosa bore, (the bright increase
 Of Phorcys, dreaded in the sounds and seas :
 Whom Neptune ey'd with bloom of beauty blest,
 And in his cave the yielding nymph comprest. 95
 For this, the god constrains the Greek to roam,
 A hopeless exile from his native home.
 From death alone exempt—But cease to mourn ;
 Let all combine t' atchieve his wish'd return :
 Neptune aton'd, his wrath shall now refrain, 100
 Or thwart the synod of the gods in vain.
 Father and king ador'd ! Minerva cry'd,
 Since all who in th' Olympian bow'r reside
 Now make the wand'ring Greek their public care,
 Let Hermes to th' Atlantic isle * repair ; 105
 Bid him, arriv'd in bright Calypso's court,
 'The sanction of th' assembled pow'rs report :
 That wise Ulysses to his native land
 Must speed, obedient to their high command.
 Meantime Telemachus, the blooming heir 110
 Of sea-girt Ithaca, demands my care :
 'Tis mine to form his green, unpractis'd years,
 In sage debates, surrounded with his peers,
 To save the state, and timely to restrain
 The bold intrusion of the suitor train ; 115
 Who crowd his palace, and, with lawless pow'r,
 His herds and flocks in feastful rites devour.
 To distant Sparta, and the spacious waste
 Of sandy Pyle, the royal youth shall haste.
 There, warm with filial love, the course inquire 120
 That from his realm retards his godlike sire :
 Deliv'ring early to the voice of fame
 The promise of a great, immortal name.
 She said : the sandals of celestial mold
 Fledg'd with ambrosial plumes, and rich with gold, 125
 Surround her feet ; with these sublime she sails
 Th' ærial space, and mounts the winged gales :
 O'er earth and ocean wide prepar'd to soar,
 Her dreaded arm a beamy jav'lin bore,

* Ogygia.

Pond'rous and vast ; which, when her fury burns, 130
 Proud tyrants humbles, and whole hosts o'erturns.
 From high Olympus prone her flight she bends,
 And in the realm of Ithaca descends.
 Her lineaments divine, the grave disguise
 Of Mentès' form conceal'd from human eyes : 135
 (Mentès, the monarch of the Taphian land ;)
 A glitt'ring spear wav'd awful in her hand.
 There in the portal plac'd, the heav'n born maid
 Enormous riot and misrule survey'd.
 On hides of beeves, before the palace-gate, 140
 (Sad spoils of luxury,) the suitors sat ;
 With rival art, and ardour in their mein,
 At chess they vie, to captivate the queen,
 Divining of their loves. Attending nigh,
 A menial train the flowing bowl supply : 145
 Others, apart, the spacious hall prepare,
 And form the costly feast with busy care.
 There young Telemachus, his bloomy face
 Glowing celestial sweet, with godlike grace
 Amid the circle shines : but hope and fear 150
 (Painful vicissitude !) his bosom tear.
 Now imag'd in his mind, he sees restor'd
 In peace and joy, the people's rightful lord ;
 The proud oppressors fly the vengeful sword. }
 While his fond soul these fancied triumphs swell'd ; 155
 The stranger guest, the royal youth beheld :
 Griev'd that a visitant so long should wait
 Unmark'd, unhonour'd, at a monarch's gate ;
 Instant he flew with hospitable haste,
 And the new friend with courteous air embrac'd. 160
 Stranger ! whoe'er thou art, securely rest,
 Affianc'd in my faith, a friendly guest ;
 Approach the dome, the social banquet share,
 And then the purpose of thy soul declare.
 Thus affable and mild, the prince precedes, 165
 And to the dome th' unknown celestial leads.
 The spear receiving from her hand he plac'd
 Against a column, fair with sculpture grac'd ;
 Where, seemly rang'd, in peaceful order stood
 Ulysses' arms, now long disus'd to blood. 170

He led the goddess to the sov'reign seat,
 Her feet supported with a stool of state ;
 (A purple carpet spread the pavement wide,)

Then drew his seat, familiar, to her side ;
 Far from the suitor-train, a brutal crowd, 175
 With insolence, and wine, elate and loud :
 Where the free guest, unnoted might relate,
 If haply conscious of his father's fate.
 The golden ew'r a maid obsequious brings,
 Replenish'd from the cool, translucent springs ; 180
 With copious water, the bright vase supplies
 A silver laver, of capacious size :
 They wash. The tables in fair order spread,
 They heap the glitt'ring cannisters with bread :
 Viands of various kinds allure the taste, 185
 Of choicest sort and savour, rich repast !
 Delicious wines th' attending herald brought ;
 The gold gave lustre to the purple draught.
 Lur'd with the vapour of the fragrant feast,
 In rush'd the suitors with voracious haste : 190
 Marshall'd in order due, to each a sew'r
 Presents, to bathe his hands, a radiant ew'r.
 Luxurious then they feast. Observant round
 Gay stripling youths the brimming goblets crown'd.
 The rage of hunger quell'd, they all advance, 195
 And form to measur'd airs the mazy dance :
 To Phemius was consign'd the chorded lyre,
 Whose hand reluctant touch'd the warbling wire :
 Phemius, whose voice divine could sweetest sing
 High strains, responsive to the vocal string. 200
 Meanwhile, in whispers, to this heav'nly guest
 His indignation thus the prince exprest.
 Indulge my rising grief, whilst these (my friend)
 With song and dance the pompous revel end.
 Light is the dance, and doubly sweet the lays, 205
 When for the dear delight another pays.
 His treasur'd stores these cormorants consume,
 Whose bones, defrauded of a regal tomb
 And common turf, lie naked on the plain,
 Or doom'd to welter in the whelming main. 210
 Should he return, that troop so blithe and bold,
 With purple robes inwrought, and stiff with gold,

Precipitant in fear, would wing their flight,
 And curse their cumb'rous pride's unweildy weight.
 But ah ! I dream !——th' appointed hour is fled, 215
 And hope, too long with vain delusion fed,
 Deaf to the rumour of fallacious fame,
 Gives to the roll of death his glorious name !
 With venial freedom let me now demand
 Thy name, thy lineage, and paternal land : 220
 Sincere, from whence began thy course, recite,
 And to what ship I owe the friendly freight ?
 Now first to me this visit dost thou deign,
 Or number'd in my father's social train ?
 All who deserv'd his choice, he made his own, 225
 And curious much to know, he far was known.

My birth I boast, (the blue-ey'd virgin cries,)
 From great Anchialus, renown'd and wise :
 Mentès my name ; I rule the Taphian race,
 Whose bounds the deep circumfluent waves embrace :
 A duteous people, and industrious isle, 231
 To naval arts inur'd, and stormy toil.
 Freightèd with iron from my native land,
 I steer my voyage to the Brutian strand ;
 To gain by commerce, for the labour'd mass, 235
 A just proportion of refulgent brass.
 Far from your capitol my ship resides
 At Reithrus, and secure at anchor rides ;
 Where waving groves on airy Neion grow,
 Supremely tall, and shade the deeps below. 240
 Thence to revisit your imperial dome,
 An old hereditary guest I come :
 Your father's friend. Læertes can relate
 Our faith unspotted, and its early date ;
 Who, prest with heart corroding grief and years, 245
 To the gay court a rural shade prefers,
 Where, sole of all his train, a matron sage
 Supports with homely food his drooping age,
 With feeble steps from marshalling his vines
 Returning sad, when toilsome day declines. 250
 With friendly speed, induc'd by erring fame
 To hail Ulysses' safe return I came :
 But still the frown of some celestial pow'r
 With envious joy retards the blissful hour.

Let not your soul be sunk in sad despair; 255
He lives, he breathes this heav'nly vital air,
Among a savage race, whose shelfy bounds
With ceaseless roar the foaming deep surrounds.
The thoughts which roll within my ravish'd breast,
To me, no seer, th' inspiring gods suggest; 260
Nor skill'd, nor studious with prophetic eye
To judge the winged omens of the sky;
Yet hear this certain speech, nor deem it vain;
Tho' adamantine bonds the chief restrain,
The dire restraint his wisdom will defeat, 265
And soon restore him to his regal seat.
But, gen'rous youth! sincere and free declare,
Are you of manly growth his royal heir?
For sure Ulysses in your look appears,
The same his features, if the same his years. 270
Such was that face, on which I dwelt with joy,
Ere Greece assembled stemm'd the tides to Troy;
But parting then for that detested shore,
Our eyes, unhappy! never greeted more.
To prove a genuine birth, (the prince replies,) 275
On female truth assenting faith relies;
Thus manifest of right, I build my claim
Sure founded on a fair maternal fame,
Ulysses' son: but happier he, whom fate
Hath plac'd beneath the storms which toss the great!
Happier the son, whose hoary sire is blest 281
With humble affluence, and domestic rest!
Happier than I, to future empire born,
But doom'd a father's wretched fate to mourn!
To whom, with aspect mild, the guest divine. 285
O true descendant of a scepter'd line!
The gods a glorious fate, from anguish free,
To chaste Penelope's increase decree.
But say, yon jovial troop so gaily drest,
Is this a bridal or a friendly feast? 290
Or from their deed I lightlier may divine,
Unseemly flown with insolence and wine;
Unwelcome revellers whose lawless joy
Pains the sage ear, and hurts the sober eye?
Magnificence of old, (the prince reply'd,) 295
Beneath our roof with virtue could reside;

Unblam'd abundance crown'd the royal board,
 What time this dome rever'd her prudent lord ;
 Who now, (so heav'n decrees,) is doom'd to mourn,
 Bitter constraint ! erroneous and forlorn. 300
 Better the chief, on Ilion's hostile plain
 Had fall'n, surrounded with his warlike train ;
 Or safe return'd, the race of glory past,
 New to his friends embrace, had breath'd his last !
 Then grateful Greece, with streaming eyes, would raise
 Historic marbles, to record his praise ; 306
 His praise, eternal on the faithful stone,
 Had with transmissive honour grac'd his son.
 Now snatch'd by harpies to the dreary coast,
 Sunk is the hero, and his glory lost ; 310
 Vanish'd at once ! unheard of, and unknown !
 And I his heir in misery alone.
 Nor for a dear, lost father only flow
 The filial tears, but woe succeeds to woe :
 To tempt the spouseless queen with am'rous wiles, 315
 Resort the nobles from the neighb'ring isles ;
 From Samos, circled with th' Ionian main,
 Dulychium, and Zacynthus' silvan feign :
 Ev'n with presumptuous hope her bed t' ascend,
 'The lords of Ithaca their right pretend. 320
 She seems attentive to their pleaded vows,
 Her heart detesting what her ear allows.
 They, vain expectants of the bridal hour,
 My stores in riotous expence devour,
 In feast and dance the mirthful months employ, 325
 And meditate my doom to crown their joy.
 With tender pity touch'd, the goddess cry'd :
 Soon may kind heav'n a sure relief provide,
 Soon may your sire discharge the vengeance due,
 And all your wrongs the proud oppressors rue ! 330
 Oh ! in that portal should the chief appear,
 Each hand tremendous with a brazen spear,
 A radiant panoply his limbs incas'd ;
 For so of old my father's court he grac'd,
 When social mirth unbent his serious soul, 335
 'Ere the full banquet, and the sprightly bowl ;
 'Ere then from Ephire, the fair domain
 Of Ilus, sprung from Jason's royal train,
 Treasur'd a length of seas, a toilsome length in vain. }

For voyaging to learn the direful art 340
To taint with deadly drugs the barbed dart;
Observant of the gods, and sternly just,
Ilus refus'd t' impart the baneful trust :
With friendlier zeal my father's soul was fir'd
The drugs he knew, and gave the boon desir'd. 345
Appear'd he now with such heroic port,
As then conspicuous at the Taphain court;
Soon should yon boasters cease their haughty strife,
Or each atone his guilty love with life.
But of his wish'd return the care resign ; 350
Be future vengeance to the pow'rs divine.
My sentence hear ; with stern distaste avow'd,
To their own districts drive the suitor-crowd :
When next the morning warms the purple east,
Convoke the peerage, and the gods attest ; 355
The sorrows of your inmost soul relate ;
And form sure plans to save the sinking state.
Should second love a pleasing flame inspire,
And the chaste queen connubial rites require ;
Dismiss'd with honour, let her hence repair 360
To great Icarius, whose paternal care
Will guide her passion, and reward the choice
With wealthy dow'r, and bridal gifts of price.
Then let this dictate of my love prevail:
Instant, to foreign realms prepare to sail, 365
To learn your father's fortunes : fame may prove,
Or omen'd voice, (the messenger of Jove,)
Propitious to the search. Direct your toil
Thro' the wide ocean first to sandy Pyle ;
Of Nestor, hoary sage his doom demand ; 370
Thence speed your voyage to the Spartan strand ;
For young Atrides to th' Achaian coast
Arriv'd the last of all the victor host.
If yet Ulysses views the light, forbear,
'Till the fleet hours restore the circling year : 375
But if his soul hath wing'd the destin'd flight,
Inhabitant of deep disastrous night,
Homeward with pious speed repass the main,
To the pale shade funereal rites ordain,
Plant the fair column o'er the vacant grave, 380
A hero's honours let the hero have.

With decent grief the royal dead deplor'd,
 For the chaste queen select an equal lord.
 Then let revenge your daring mind employ.
 By fraud or force the suitor-train destroy,
 And, starting into manhood, scorn the boy.
 Hast thou not heard how young Orestes, fir'd
 With great revenge, immortal praise acquir'd ?
 His virgin-sword, Ægysthus' veins imbru'd ;
 The murd'rer fell, and blood aton'd for blood. 385 }
 O greatly bless'd with ev'ry blooming grace !
 With equal steps the paths of glory trace ;
 Join to that royal youth your rival's name,
 And shine eternal in the sphere of fame——
 But my associates now my stay deplore, 390
 Impatient on the hoarse-resounding shore.
 Thou, heedful of advice, secure proceed ;
 My praise the precept is, be thine the deed. 395
 The counsel of my friend (the youth rejoin'd)
 Imprints conviction on my grateful mind. 400
 So fathers speak (persuasive speech and mild !)
 Their sage experience to the fav'rite child.
 But, since to part, for sweet refection due
 The genial viands let my train renew :
 And the rich pledge of plighted faith receive, 405
 Worthy the heir of Ithaca to give.
 Defer the promis'd boon, (the goddess cries,
 Celestial azure bright'ning in her eyes,)
 And let me now regain the Reithrian port :
 From Temese return'd, your royal court 410
 I shall revisit ; and that pledge receive,
 And gifts memorial of our friendship, leave.
 Abrupt, with eagle speed she cut the sky ;
 Instant invisible to mortal eye.
 Then first he recogniz'd th' ætherial guest ; 415
 Wonder and joy alternate fire his breast :
 Heroic thoughts infus'd, his heart dilate,
 Revolving much his father's doubtful fate :
 At length, compos'd, he join'd the suitor-throng,
 Hush'd in attention to the warbled song, 420
 His tender theme the charming lyrist chose
 Minerva's anger, and the direful woes

Which voyaging from Troy the victors bore,
While storms vindictive intercept the shore.
The shrilling airs the vaulted roof rebounds, 425
Reflecting to the queen the silver sounds.
With grief renew'd the weeping fair descends;
Their sov'reign's step a virgin train attends :
A veil of richest texture wrought she wears,
And silent to the joyous hall repairs. 430
There from the portal, with her mild command
Thus gently checks the minstrel's tuneful hand.
Phemius ! let acts of Gods and heroes old,
What ancient bards in hall and bow'r have told,
Attemper'd to the lyre, your voice employ ; 435
Such the pleas'd ear will drink with silent joy.
But oh ! forbear that dear disastrous name,
To sorrow sacred, and secure of fame :
My bleeding bosom sickens at the sound,
And ev'ry piercing note inflicts a wound. 440
Why, dearest object of my duteous love,
(Reply'd the prince,) will you the bard reprove ?
Oft Jove's ætherial rays (resistless sire)
The chanter's soul and raptur'd song inspire ;
Instinct divine ! nor blame severe his choice, 445
Warbling the Grecian woes with harp and voice :
For novel lays attract our ravish'd ears ;
But old, the mind with inattention hears.
Patient permit the sadly-pleasing strain ;
Familiar now with grief, your tears refrain, 450
And in the public woe forget your own :
You weep not for a perish'd lord, alone.
What Greeks, now wand'ring in the Stygian gloom,
With your Ulysses shar'd an equal doom !
Your widow'd hours, apart, with female toil 455
And various labours of the loom, beguile ;
'There rule, from palace cares remote and free,
That care to man belongs, and most to me.
Mature beyond his years, the queen admires
His sage reply, and with her train retires. 460
Then swelling sorrows burst their former bounds,
With echoing grief afresh the dome resounds ;
Till Pallas, piteous of her plaintive cries,
In slumber clos'd her silver-streaming eyes.

Meantime, rekindled at the royal charms, 465
 Cumultuous love each beating bosom warms;
 Intemp'rate rage a wordy war began;
 But bold Telemachus assum'd the man.
 Instant (he cry'd) your female discord end,
 Ye deedless boasters! and the song attend; 470
 Obey that sweet compulsion, nor profane
 With dissonance the smooth melodious strain
 Pacific now prolong the jovial feast;
 But when the dawn reveals the rosy east,
 , to the peers assembled, shall propose 475
 The firm resolve, I here in few disclose.
 No longer live the cankers of my court;
 All to your sev'ral states with speed resort;
 Waste in wild riot what your land allows,
 There ply the early feast, and late carouse. 480
 But if, to honour lost, 'tis still decreed,
 For you my bowl shall flow, my flock shall bleed;
 Judge and revenge my right, impartial Jove,
 By him and all th' immortal thrones above,
 A sacred oath) each proud oppressor, slain. 485
 Shall with inglorious gore this marble stain.
 Aw'd by the prince, thus haughty, bold, and young,
 Rage gnaw'd the lip, and wonder chain'd the tongue.
 Silence at length the gay Antinous broke,
 Constrain'd a smile, and thus ambiguous spoke. 490
 What god to your untutor'd youth affords
 This headlong torrent of amazing words?
 May Jove delay thy reign, and cumber late
 So bright a genius with the toils of state!
 Those toils (Telemachus serene replies) 495
 Have charms, with all their weight, t' allure the wise.
 Past by the throne obsequious fame resides,
 And wealth incessant rolls her golden tides.
 Nor let Antinous rage if strong desire
 Of wealth and fame a youthful bosom fire: 500
 Elect by Jove his delegate of sway,
 With joyous pride the summons I'd obey.
 Whene'er Ulysses roams the realm of night,
 Should factious pow'r dispute my lineal right,
 Some other Greek a fairer claim may plead; 505
 To your pretence their title would precede.

At least the sceptre lost, I still should reign
Sole o'er my vassals, and domestic train.

To this Eurymachus. To heav'n alone
Refer the choice to fill the vacant throne. 510

Your patrimonial stores in peace possess ;
Undoubted all your filial claim confess :
Your private right should impious pow'r invade,
The peers of Ithaca would arm in aid.

But say, that stranger-guest who late withdrew, 315
What and from whence ? his name and lineage shew.

His grave demeanor, and majestic grace
Speak him descended of no vulgar race :
Did he some loan of ancient right require,
Or came fore-runner of your scepter'd sire ? 520

Oh son of Polybus ! the prince replies,
No more my sire will glad these longing eyes :
The queen's fond hope inventive rumour cheers,
Or vain diviners' dreams divert her fears.

That stranger-guest the Taphian realm obeys, 525
A realm defended with incircling seas.

Mentes, an ever-honour'd name, of old
High in Ulysses' social list inroll'd.

Thus he, tho' conscious of th' ætherial guest,
Answer'd evasive of the sly request. 530

Meantime the lyre rejoins the sprightly lay ;
Love-dittied airs, and dance, conclude the day.

But when the star of eve, with golden light
Adorn'd the matron brow of sable night ;
The mirthful train dispersing quit the court, 535
And to their several domes to rest resort.

A tow'ring structure to the palace join'd ;
To this his steps the thoughtful prince inclin'd ;

In his pavilion there, to sleep repairs ;
The lighted torch, the sage Euryclea bears : 540

(Daughter of Ops, the just Pisenor's son,
For twenty beeves by great Laertes won ;

In rosy prime with charms attractive grac'd,
Honour'd by him, a gentle lord and chaste,

With dear esteem : too wise, with jealous strife 545
To taint the joys of sweet, connubial life.

Sole with Telemachus her service ends,
A child she nurs'd him, and a man attends.)

Whilst to his couch the prince himself address,
The duteous dame receiv'd the purple vest : 550
The purple vest with decent care dispos'd,
The silver ring she pull'd, the door reclos'd :
The bolt obedient to the silken cord,
To the strong staple's inmost depth restor'd,
Secur'd the valves. There, wrapt in silent shade, 555
Pensive, the rules the goddess gave he weigh'd ;
Stretch'd on the downy fleece, no rest he knows
And in his raptur'd soul the vision glows.

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK II.

The Argument.

The Council of Ithaca.

TELEMACHUS, in the assembly of the lords of Ithaca, complains of the injustice done him by the suitors, and insists upon their departure from his palace; appealing to the princes, and exciting the people to declare against them. The suitors endeavour to justify their stay, at least till he shall send the queen to the court of Icarus her father; which he refuses. There appears a prodigy of two eagles in the sky, which an augur expounds to the ruin of the suitors. Telemachus then demands a vessel to carry him to Pylos and Sparta, there to enquire of his father's fortunes. Pallas in the shape of Mentor (an ancient friend of Ulysses) helps him to a ship, assists him in preparing necessaries for the voyage, and embarks with him that night; which concludes the second day from the opening of the poem.

The scene continues in the palace of Ulysses in Ithaca.

NOW redd'ning from the dawn, the morning ray
Glow'd in the front of heav'n, and gave the day.
The youthful hero, with returning light,
Rose anxious from th' inquietudes of night.
A royal robe he wore, with graceful pride,
A two-edg'd faulchion threaten'd by his side,
Embroider'd sandals glitter'd as he trode,
And forth he mov'd, majestic as a god.
Then by his heralds, restless of delay,
To council calls the peers; the peers obey.

on as in solemn form th' assembly sat,
 from his high doom himself descends in state.
 In his hand a pond'rous jav'lin shin'd,
 Two dogs, a faithful guard, attend behind;
 His hoary peers, and aged wisdom bow'd,
 And gazing crowds admire him as he moves. 15
 His father's throne he fill'd : while distant stood
 The hoary peers, and aged wisdom bow'd.
 'Twas silence all, at last Ægyptius spoke ;
 Ægyptius, by his age and sorrows broke : 20
 Length of days his soul with prudence crown'd,
 Length of days had bent him to the ground.
 His eldest * hope in arms to Ilion came,
 Great Ulysses taught the path to fame ;
 But (hapless youth !) the hideous Cyclops tore 25
 His quiv'ring limbs, and quaff'd his spouting gore.
 Three sons remain'd ; to climb with haughty fires
 The royal bed, Eurynomus aspires :
 He rest with duteous love his griefs assuage,
 And ease the sire of half the cares of age. 30
 But still his Antiphus he loves, he mourns,
 And as he stood, he spoke and wept by turns.
 Since great Ulysses sought the Phrygian plains,
 Within these walls inglorious silence reigns.
 Why then, ye peers ! by whose commands we meet ? 35
 Why here once more in solemn council sit ?
 O young, ye old, the weighty cause disclose :
 Gives some message of invading foes ?
 Or say, does high necessity of state
 Inspire some patriot, and demand debate ? 40
 He present synod speaks its author wise,
 Assist him, Jove, thou regent of the skies !
 He spoke. Telemachus with transport glows,
 Embrac'd the omen, and majestic rose ;
 His royal hand th' imperial sceptre sway'd ;) 45
 When thus, addressing to Ægyptius said.
 Rev'rend old man ! lo here confest he stands
 By whom ye meet ; my grief your care demands.
 O story I unfold of public woes,
 For bear advices of impending foes : 50
 Peace the blest land, and joys incessant crown,
 Of all this happy realm, I grieve alone.

* Antiphus.

For my lost sire continual sorrows spring,
 The great, the good ; your father, and your king,
 Yet more ; our house from its foundation bows, 55
 Our foes are pow'rful, and your sons the foes :
 Hither, unwelcome to the queen they come,
 Why seek they not the rich Icarian dome ?
 If she must wed, from other hands require
 The dow'ry : is Telemachus her sire ? 60
 Yet thro' my court the noise of revel rings,
 And waste the wise frugality of kings.
 Scarce all my herds their luxury suffice
 Scarce all my wine their midnight-hours supplies. 65
 Safe in my youth, in riot still they grow,
 Nor in the helpless orphan dread a foe.
 But come it will, the time when manhood grants
 More pow'rful advocates than vain complaints.
 Approach that hour ! unsufferable wrong
 Cries to the gods, and vengeance sleeps too long. 70
 Rise then, ye peers ! with virtuous anger rise !
 Your fame revere, but most the avenging skies,
 By all the deathless pow'rs that reign above,
 By righteous Themis and by thund'ring Jove,
 (Themis, who gives to councils or denies 75
 Success ; and humbles, or confirms the wise,)
 Rise in my aid ! suffice the tears that flow,
 For my lost sire, nor add new woe to woe.
 If e're he bore the sword to strengthen ill,
 Or having pow'r to wrong, betray'd the will, 80
 On me, on me, your kindled wrath assuage,
 And bid the voice of lawless riot rage.
 If ruin to our royal race ye doom,
 Be you the spoilers, and our wealth consume.
 Then might we hope redress from juster laws, 85
 And raise all Ithaca to aid our cause :
 But while your sons commit th' unpunish'd wrong,
 You make the arm of violence too strong.
 While thus he spoke, with rage and grief he frown'd,
 And dash'd th' imperial sceptre to the ground. 90
 The big round tear hung trembling in his eye :
 The synod griev'd, and gave a pitying sigh,
 Then silent sat.—At length Antinous burns
 With haughty rage, and sternly thus returns.

Insolence of youth ! whose tongue affords 95
 Ch railing eloquence, and war of words.
 Adious thy country's worthies to defame,
 Y erring voice displays thy mother's shame.
 sive of the bridal day, she gives
 nd hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives. 100
 I not the sun, thro' heav'n's wide azure roll'd,
 : three long years the royal fraud behold ?
 hile she, laborious in delusion, spread
 e spacious loom, and mix'd the various thread :
 ere, as to life the wond'rous figures rise, 105
 us spoke th' inventive queen, with artful sighs.
 Tho' cold in death Ulysses breathes no more,
 ease yet a while to urge the bridal hour ;
 ease, till to great Laertes I bequeath,
 . task of grief, his ornaments of death. 110
 est when the fates his royal ashes claim,
 he Grecian matrons taint my spotless fame ;
 When he, whom living mighty realms obey'd,
 hall want in death a shroud to grace his shade.
 Thus she : at once the gen'rous train complies, 115
 r fraud mistrusts in virtue's fair disguise.
 e work she ply'd ; but studious of delay,
 ight revers'd the labours of the day.
 hile thrice the sun his annual journey made,
 e conscious lamp the midnight fraud survey'd ; 120
 heard, unseen, three years her arts prevail,
 e fourth her maid unfolds th' amazing tale.
 e saw, as unperceiv'd we took our stand,
 e backward labours of her faithless hand.
 en urg'd, she perfects her illustrious toils, 125
 wond'rous monument of female wiles !
 But you, oh peers ! and thou, oh prince ! give ear,
 speak aloud that every Greek may hear,)
 ismiss the queen ; and, if her sire approves,
 t him espouse her to the peer she loves : 130
 d instant to prepare the bridal train,
 or let a race of princes wait in vain.
 ho' with a grace divine her soul is blest,
 nd all Minerva breathes within her breast,
 . wond'rous arts than woman more renown'd, 135
 nd more than woman with deep wisdom crown'd ;

Tho' Tyro nor Mycene match her name,
 Nor great Alcmene, (the proud boasts of fame,)
 Yet thus by heav'n adorn'd, by heav'n's decree
 She shines with fatal excellence, to thee: 140
 With thee, the bowl we drain, indulge the feast,
 Till righteous heav'n reclaim her stubborn breast.
 What tho' from pole to pole resounds her name!
 The son's destruction waits the mother's fame:
 For till she leaves thy court, it is decreed, 145
 Thy bowl to empty, and thy flocks to bleed.
 While yet he speaks, Telemachus replies.
 Ev'n nature starts, and what ye ask denies.
 Thus, shall I thus repay a mother's cares,
 Who gave me life, and nurs'd my infant years? 150
 While sad on foreign shores Ulysses treads,
 Or glides a ghost with unapparent shades,
 How to Icarius in the bridal hour
 Shall I, by waste undone, refund the dow'r?
 How from my father should I vengeance dread! 155
 How would my mother curse my hated head!
 And while in wrath to vengeful fiends she cries,
 How from their hell would vengeful fiends arise?
 Abhor'd by all, accurs'd my name would grow,
 The earth's disgrace, and humankind my foe. 160
 If this displease, why urge ye here your stay?
 Haste from the court, ye spoilers, haste away:
 Waste in wild riot what your land allows,
 There ply the early feast, and late carouse.
 But if to honour lost, 'tis still decreed 165
 For you my bowl shall flow, my flocks shall bleed;
 Judge and assert my right, impartial Jove!
 By him, and all th' immortal host above,
 (A sacred oath,) if heav'n the pow'r supply,
 Vengeance I vow, and for your wrongs ye die. 170
 With that, two eagles, from a mountain's height,
 By Jove's command, direct their rapid flight;
 Swift they descend, with wing to wing conjoin'd,
 Stretch their broad plumes, and float upon the wind.
 Above th' assembled peers they wheel on high, 175
 And clang their wings, and hov'ring beat the sky;
 With ardent eyes the rival train they threat,
 And shrieking loud, denounce approaching fate.

They cuff, they tear ; their cheeks and necks they rend,
 And from their plumes huge drops of blood descend :
 Then sailing o'er the domes and towers, they fly 181
 Full tow'rd the east, and mount into the sky.

The wond'ring rival gaze with care oppress,
 And chilling horrors freeze in ev'ry breast.
 Till, big with knowledge of approaching woes, 185
 The prince of augurs, Hailthereses, rose :
 Prescient he view'd th' aerial tracks, and drew
 A sure presage from ev'ry wing that flew.

Ye sons (he cry'd) of Ithaca, give ear,
 Hear all ! but chiefly you, oh rivals ! hear, 190
 Destruction sure o'er all your heads impends ;
 Ulysses comes, and death his steps attends.
 Nor to the great alone is death decreed ;
 We, and our guilty Ithaca, must bleed.

Why cease we then the wrath of heav'n to stay ? 195
 Be humbled all, and lead, ye great ! the way.
 For lo ! my words no fancy'd woes relate :
 I speak from 'science, and the voice is fate.

When great Ulysses sought the Phrygian shores,
 To shake with war proud Ilion's lofty tow'rs, 200
 Deeds then undone my faithful tongue foretold :
 Heav'n send my words, and you those deeds behold.

see (I cry'd) his woes, a countless train ;
 see his friends o'erwhelm'd beneath the main :
 How twice ten years from shore to shore he roams ; 205
 How twice ten years are past, and now he comes !

To whom Eurymachus.—Fly, dotard, fly !
 With thy wise dreams, and fables of the sky.
 To prophecy at home ; thy sons advise :
 Here thou art sage in vain—I better read the skies. 210

Innumber'd birds glide thro' the aerial way,
 Agrants of air, and unforeboding stray.
 Old in the tomb, or in the deeps below,
 Ulysses lies ; oh wert thou laid as low !

When would that busy head no broils suggest, 215
 Or fire to rage Telemachus's breast.

From him some bribe thy venal tongue requires,
 And int'rest, not the god, thy voice inspires.

Is guideless youth, if thy experienc'd age
 Mislead fallacious into idle rage, 220

Vengeance deserv'd thy malice shall repress,
 And but augment the wrongs thou would'st redress,
 Telemachus may bid the queen repair
 To great Icarius, whose paternal care
 Will guide her passion, and reward her choice, 225

With wealthy dow'r, and bridal gifts of price.
 Till she retires, determin'd we remain,
 And both the prince and augur threat in vain :
 His pride of words and thy wild dream of fate,
 Move not the brave, or only move their hate. 230

Threat on, oh prince ! elude the bridal day,
 Threat on, till all thy stores in waste decay.
 True, Greece affords a train of lovely dames,
 In wealth and beauty worthy of our flames :
 But never from this nobler suit we cease ; 235
 For wealth and beauty less than virtue please.

To whom the youth. Since then in vain I tell
 My num'rous wrongs in silence let them dwell.
 But heav'n, and all the Greeks, have heard my wrongs :
 To heav'n, and all the Greeks, redress belongs. 240

Yet this I ask, (nor be it ask'd in vain,)
 A bark to waft me o'er the rolling main ;
 The realms of Pyle and Sparta to explore,
 And seek my royal sire from shore to shore.
 If, or to fame his doubtful fate be known, 245
 Or to be learn'd from oracles alone !

If yet he lives, with patience I forbear,
 Till the fleet hours restore the circling year :
 But if already wand'ring in the train
 Of empty shades, I measure back the main, 250
 Plant the fair column o'er the mighty deed,
 And yield his consort to the nuptial bed.

He ceas'd ; and while abash'd the peers attend,
 Mentor arose, Ulysses' faithful friend :
 [When fierce in arms he sought the scenes of war, 255

' My friend (he cry'd) my palace be thy care ;
 ' Years roll'd on years my godlike sire decay,
 ' Guard thou his age, and his behests obey.']
 Stern as he rose, he cast his eyes around,
 That flash'd with rage ; and as he spoke, he frown'd.

O never, never more ! let king be just, 261
 Be mild in pow'r, or faithful to his trust !

et tyrants govern with an iron rod,
 oppress, destroy, and be the scourge of God;
 once he who like a father held his reign, 265
 soon forgot, was just and mild in vain!
 rue, while my friend is griev'd, his griefs I share;
 et now the rivals are my smallest care:
 hey, for the mighty mischiefs they devise,
 ere long shall pay—their forfeit lives the price. 270
 ut against you, ye Greeks! ye coward train,
 ods! how my soul is mov'd with just disdain!
 umb ye all stand, and not one tongue affords
 is injur'd prince the little aid of words.

While yet he spoke, Leocritus rejoin'd: 275
 pride of words, and arrogance of mind!
 ouldst thou to rise in arms the Greeks advise!
 in all your pow'rs! in arms the Greeks, arise!
 et would your pow'rs in vain our strength oppose;
 he valiant few o'ermatch an host of foes. 280
 ould great Ulysses stern appear in arms,
 hile the bowl circles, and the banquet warms;
 ho' to his breast his spouse with transport flies,
 orn from her breast, that hour, Ulysses dies.
 ut hence retreating to your domes repair; 285
 o arm the vessel, Mentor! be thy care,
 nd Halitherses! thine: be each his friend;
 e lov'd the father: go, the son attend.
 ut yet, I trust, the boaster means to stay
 afe in the court, nor tempt the wat'ry way. 290

Then, with a rushing sound, th' assembly bend
 iverse their steps: the rival rout ascend
 he royal dome; while sad the prince explores
 he neighb'ring main, and sorrowing treads the shores.
 here, as the waters o'er his hands he shed, 295
 he royal suppliant to Minerva pray'd.

O goddess! who descending from the skies
 ouchsaf'd thy presence to my wond'ring eyes,
 y whose commands the raging deeps I trace,
 and seek my sire thro' storms and rolling seas! 300
 lear from thy heav'n's above, oh warrior maid!
 Descend once more, propitious to my aid.
 ithout thy presence, vain is thy command;
 reece, and the rival train, thy voice withstand.

Indulgent to his pray'r, the goddess took 305
Sage Mentor's form, and thus like Mentor spoke.

O prince, in early youth divinely wise,
Born, the Ulysses of thy age to rise !
If to the son the father's worth descends,
O'er the wide waves success thy ways attends, 310
To tread the walks of death he stood prepar'd,
And what he greatly thought, he nobly dar'd.
Were not wise sons descendant of the wise,
And did not heroes from brave heroes rise,
Vain were my hopes : few sons attain the praise 315
Of their great sires, and most their sires disgrace.
But since thy veins paternal virtue fires,
And all Penelope thy soul inspires,
Go, and succeed ! the rivals aims despise ;
For never, never, wicked man was wise. 320
Blind they rejoice, tho' now, ev'n now they fall ;
Death hastes amain : one hour o'erwhelms them all !
And lo, with speed we plough the watry way ;
My pow'r shall guard thee, and my hand convey :
The winged vessel studious I prepare, 325
Thro' seas and realms companion of thy care.
Thou to the court ascend ; and to the shores
(When night advances) bear the naval stores ;
Bread, that decaying man with strength supplies,
And gen'rous wine, which thoughtful sorrow flies. 330
Meanwhile the mariners, by my command,
Shall speed aboard, a valiant chosen band.
Wide o'er the bay, by vessel vessel rides ;
The best I chuse to waft thee o'er the tides.

She spoke : to his high dome the prince returns, 335
And as he moves with royal anguish mourns.
'Twas riot all, among the lawless train ;
Boar bled by boar, and goat by goat lay slain.
Arriv'd, his hand the gay Antinous prest,
And thus deriding, with a smile address. 340

Grieve not, oh daring prince ! that noble heart ;
Ill suits gay youth the stern heroic part.
Indulge the genial hour, unbend thy soul,
Leave thought to age, and drain the flowing bowl.
Studious to ease thy grief, our care provides 345
The bark, to waft thee o'er the swelling tides.

Is this (returns the prince) for mirth a time ?
 When lawless gluttons riot, mirth's a crime ;
 The luscious wines, dishonour'd, lose their taste ;
 The song is noise, and impious is the feast. 350
 Suffice it to have spent with swift decay
 The wealth of kings, and made my youth a prey ;
 But now the wise instructions of the sage,
 And manly thoughts, inspir'd by manly age,
 Teach me to seek redress for all my woe, 355
 Here, or in Pyle—in Pyle, or here, your foe.
 Deny your vessels, ye deny in vain ;
 A private voyager I pass the main.

Free breathe the winds, and free the billows flow,
 And where on earth I live, I live your foe. 360

He spoke and frown'd, nor longer deign'd to stay,
 Sternly his hand withdrew, and strode away.

Meantime, o'er all the dome, they quaff, they feast, }
 Derisive taunts were spread from guest to guest,
 And each in jovial mood his mate address. 365 }

Tremble ye not, O friends ! and coward fly,
 Doom'd by the stern Telemachus to die ?
 To Pyle or Sparta to demand supplies,
 Or with revenge the mighty warrior flies :
 Or comes from Ephyre, with poisons fraught, 370
 And kills us all in one tremendous draught ?

Or who can say (his gamesome mate replies,)
 But while the danger of the deeps he tries,
 He, like his sire, may sink depriv'd of breath,
 And punish us unkindly by his death ? 375

What mighty labours would he then create,
 To seize his treasures, and divide his state,
 The royal palace to the queen convey,
 Or him she blesses in the bridal day !

Meantime the lofty rooms the prince surveys, 380
 Where lay the treasures of th' Ithacian race :

Here ruddy brass and gold refulgent blaz'd ;
 Here polish'd chests embroider'd vestures grac'd ;
 Here jars of oil breath'd forth a rich perfume ;
 Here casks of wine in rows adorn'd the dome. 385
 Pure flav'rous wine, by gods in bounty giv'n,
 And worthy to exalt the feasts of heav'n.)

Untouch'd they stood, till his long labours o'er,
The great Ulysses reach'd his native shore.
A double strength of bars secur'd the gates : 390
Fast by the door the wise Euryclea waits ;
Euryclea, who, great Ops ! thy lineage shar'd,
And watch all night, all day ; a faithful guard.

To whom the prince : O thou, whose guardian care
Nurs'd the most wretched king that breathes the air !
Untouch'd and sacred may these vessels stand, 396
Till great Ulysses views his native land.

But by thy care twelve urns of wine be fill'd,
Next these in worth, and firm those urns be seal'd ;
And twice ten measures of the choicest flour 400
Prepar'd, e'er yet descends the ev'ning hour.
For when the fav'ring shades of night arise,
And peaceful slumbers close my mother's eyes,
Me from our coast shall spreading sails convey,
To seek Ulysses thro' the watry way. 405

While yet he spoke, she fill'd the walls with cries,
And tears ran trickling from her aged eyes.
Oh whither, whither flies my son ? she cry'd,
To realms, that rocks and roaring sons divide ?
In foreign lands thy fathers days decay'd, 410
And foreign lands contain the mighty dead.
The watry way ill-fated if thou try,
All, all must perish, and by fraud you die !

Then stay, my child ! storms beat, and rolls the main ;
Oh beat those storms, and roll the seas in vain ! 415

Far hence (reply'd the prince) thy fears be driv'n !
Heav'n calls me forth ; these counsels are of heav'n.
But by the pow'rs that hate the perjur'd, swear,
To keep my voyage from the royal ear,
Nor uncompell'd the dang'rous truth betray, 420
Till twice six times descends the lamp of day :
Lest the sad tale a mother's life impair,
And grief destroy what time a-while would spare.

Thus he. The matron with uplifted eyes
Attests th' all-seeing Sov'reign of the skies. 425
Then studious she prepares the choicest flour,
The strength of wheat, and wine an ample store.
While to the rival train the prince returns,
The martial goddess with impatience burns ;

Like thee, Telemachus, in voice and size. 430

With speed divine from street to street she flies.

She bids the mariners prepar'd, to stand,

When night descends, embody'd on the strand.

Then to Noemon swift she runs, she flies,

And asks a bark : the chief a bark supplies. 435

And now, declining with his sloping wheels,

Down sunk the sun behind the western hills.

The goddess shov'd the vessel from the shores,

And stow'd within its womb the naval stores.

Full in th' op'nings of the spacious main 440

rides ; and now descends the sailor-train.

Next, to the court, impatient of delay,

With rapid step the goddess urg'd her way ;

Where ev'ry eye with slumb'rous chains she bound,

And dash'd the flowing goblet to the ground. 445

Browsy they rose, with heavy fumes oppress'd,

Keel'd from the palace, and retir'd to rest.

Then thus, in Mentor's rev'rend form array'd,

Spoke to Telemachus the martial maid.

O ! on the seas, prepar'd, the vessel stands, 450

Th' impatient mariner thy speed demands.

Swift as she spoke, with rapid pace she leads ;

Her footsteps of the deity he treads.

Swift to the shore they move : along the strand

The ready vessel rides, the sailors ready stand. 455

He bids them bring their stores ; th' attending train,

Board the tall bark, and launch into the main.

The prince and goddess to the stern ascend ;

To the strong stroke at once the rowers bend.

All from the west she bids fresh breezes blow ; 460

The sable billows foam and roar below.

The chief his orders gives ; th' obedient band

With due observance wait the chief's command ;

With speed the mast they rear, with speed unbind

The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind. 465

High o'er the roaring waves the spreading sails

Swave the tall mast, and swell before the gales ;

The crooked keel the parting surge divides,

And to the stern retreating roll the tides.

And now they ship their oars, and crown with wine
The holy goblet to the pow'rs divine ; 471
Imploring all the gods that reign above,
But chief the blue-ey'd progeny of Jove.

Thus all the night they stem the liquid way,
And end their voyage with the morning ray. 475

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK III.

The Argument.

The interview of Telemachus and Nestor.

TELEMACHUS, guided by Pallas in the shape of Mentor, arrives in the morning at Pylos, where Nestor and his sons are sacrificing on the sea shore to Neptune. Telemachus declares the occasion of his coming, and Nestor relates what past in their return from Troy, how their fleets were separated, and he never since heard of Ulysses. They discourse concerning the death of Agamemnon, the revenge of Orestes, and the injuries of the suitors. Nestor advises him to go to Sparta, and inquire further of Menelaus. The sacrifice ending with the night, Minerva vanishes from them in the form of an eagle: Telemachus is lodged in the palace. The next morning they sacrifice a bullock to Minerva, and Telemachus proceeds on his journey to Sparta attended by Pisistratus.

The scene lies on the sea shore of Pylos.

THE sacred sun above the waters rais'd,
Thro' heav'n's eternal brazen portals blaz'd;
And wide o'er earth diffus'd his cheering ray,
To gods and men to give the golden day.
Now on the coast of Pyle the vessel falls, 5
Before old Nelus' venerable walls.
There, suppliant to the monarch of the flood,
At nine green theatres the Pylians stood.
Each held five hundred, (a deputed train;) 10
At each, nine oxen on the sand lay slain.

They taste the entrails, and the altars load
With smoaking thighs, an off'ring to the god.
Full for the port the Ithacensians stand,
And furl their sails, and issue on the land.
Telemachus already press the shore ; 15
Not first, the power of wisdom march'd before,
And e'er the sacrificing throng he join'd,
Admonish'd thus his well attending mind.

Proceed, my son ! this youthful shame expel ;
An honest bus'ness never blush to tell. 20
To learn what fates thy wretched sire detain,
We past the wide, immeasurable main.
Meet then the senior far renown'd for sense,
With rev'rend awe, but decent confidence :
Urge him with truth to frame his fair replies ; 25
And sure he will ; for wisdom never lies.
Oh tell me, Mentor ! tell me, faithful guide,
(The youth with prudent modesty reply'd,)
How shall I meet, or how accost the sage,
Unskill'd of speech, nor yet mature of age ? 30
Awful th' approach, and hard the task appears,
To question wisely men of ripers years.

To whom the martial goddess thus rejoin'd.
Search, for some thoughts, thy own suggesting mind ;
And others, dictated by heav'nly pow'r, 35
Shall rise spontaneous in the needful hour.
For nought unprop'rous shall thy ways attend,
Born with good omens, and with heav'n thy friend.

She spoke, and led the way with swiftest speed :
As swift, the youth pursu'd the way she led ; 40
And join'd the band before the sacred fire,
Where sat, encompass'd with his sons the sire.
The youth of Pylos, some on pointed wood
Transfix'd the fragments, some prepar'd the food.
In friendly throngs they gather to embrace 45
Their unknown guests, and at the banquets place.
Pisistratus was first to grasp their hands,
And spread soft hides upon the yellow sands ;
Along the shore th' illustrious pair he led,
Where Nestor sat with youthful Thrasymed. 50
To each a portion of the feast he bore,
And held the golden goblet foaming o'er ;

When first approaching to the elder guest,
 The latent goddess in these words addrest.
 Whoe'er thou art, whom fortune brings to keep 55
 These rites of Neptune, monarch of the deep,
 He first it fits, oh stranger! to prepare
 The due libation and the solemn pray'r:
 Then give thy friend to shed the sacred wine;
 Tho' much thy younger, and his years like mine, 60 }
 He too, I deem, implores the pow'rs divine:
 For all mankind alike require their grace,
 All born to want; a miserable race.

He spake, and to her hand prefer'd the bowl:
 A secret pleasure touch'd Athena's soul, 65
 To see the preference due to sacred age
 Regarded ever by the just and sage.
 Of ocean's king she then implores the grace.
 Oh thou! whose arms this ample globe embrace,
 Fulfil our wish, and let thy glory shine 70
 On Nestor first, and Nestor's royal line;
 Next grant the Pylian states their just desires,
 Pleas'd with their Hecatomb's ascending fires;
 Last deign Telemachus and me to bless,
 And crown our voyage with desir'd success. 75

Thus she; and having paid the rite divine
 Gave to Ulysses' son the rosy wine.
 Suppliant he pray'd. And now the victims drest
 They draw, divide, and celebrate the feast.
 The banquet done, the narrative old man, 80
 Thus mild, the pleasing conference began.

Now, gentle guests! the genial banquet o'er,
 It fits to ask ye, what your native shore,
 And whence your race? on what adventure, say,
 Thus far ye wander thro' the watry way? 85
 Relate, if bus'ness, or the thirst of gain,
 Engage your journey o'er the pathless main?
 Where savage pirates seek thro' seas unknown
 The lives of others, vent'rous of their own.

Urg'd by the precepts by the goddess giv'n, 90
 And fill'd with confidence infus'd from heav'n,
 The youth, whom Pallas destin'd to be wise,
 And fam'd among the sons of men, replies.

Inquir'st thou, father! from what coast we came?
 (O grace and glory of the Grecian name!) 95
 From where high Ithaca o'erlooks the floods,
 Brown with o'er-arching shades and pendent woods.
 Us to these shores our filial duty draws,
 A private sorrow, not a public cause.
 My sire I seek, where'er the voice of fame 100
 Has told the glories of his noble name,
 The great Ulysses; fam'd from shore to shore,
 For valour much, for hardy suff'ring more.
 Long time with thee before proud Ilion's wall
 In arms he fought; with thee beheld her fall. 105
 Of all the chiefs, this hero's fate alone
 Has Jove reserv'd, unheard of, and unknown;
 Whether in fields by hostile fury slain,
 Or sunk by tempests in the gulfy main?
 Of this to learn, oppress'd with tender fears, 110
 Lo, at thy knee his suppliant son appears.
 If or thy certain eye, or curious ear,
 Have learnt his fate, the whole dark story clear:
 And oh! whate'er heav'n destin'd to betide,
 Let neither flatt'ry smooth, nor pity hide. 115
 Prepar'd I stand: he was but born to try
 The lot of man; to suffer and to die.
 Oh then, if ever thro' the ten years war
 The wise, the good Ulysses claim'd thy care;
 If e'er he join'd thy council, or thy sword, 120
 True in his deed, and constant to his word;
 Far as thy mind thro' backward time can see,
 Search all thy stores of faithful memory:
 'Tis sacred truth I ask, and ask of thee. }
 To him experienc'd Nestor thus rejoin'd. 125
 O friend! what sorrows dost thou bring to mind?
 Shall I the long, laborious scene review,
 And open all the wounds of Greece anew?
 What toils by sea! where dark in quest of prey
 Dauntless we rov'd; Achilles led the way; 130
 What toils by land! were mixt in fatal fight
 Such numbers fell, such heroes sunk to night:
 There Ajax great, Achilles there the brave,
 There wise Patroclus, fill an early grave:

There too my son—ah once my best delight, 135
Once swift of foot, and terrible in fight,
In whom stern courage with soft virtue join'd,
A faultless body, and a blameless mind:
Antilochus—what more can I relate?
How trace the tedious series of our fate? 140
Not added years on years my task could close,
The long historian of my country's woes;
Back to thy native islands might'st thou sail,
And leave half-heard the melancholy tale;
Nine painful years on that detested shore, 145
What stratagems we form'd, what toils we bore?
Still lab'ring on, till scarce at last we found
Great Jove propitious, and our conquest crown'd.
Far o'er the rest thy mighty father shin'd,
In wit, in prudence, and in force of mind. 150
Art thou the son of that illustrious sire?
With joy I grasp thee, and with love admire.
So like your voices, and your words so wise,
Who finds thee younger must consult his eyes.
Thy sire and I were one; nor vary'd ought 155
In public sentence, or in private thought;
Alike to council or th' assembly came,
With equal souls and sentiments the same.
But when (by wisdom won) proud Ilion burn'd,
And in their ships the conqu'ring Greeks return'd;
'Twas God's high will the victors to divide, 161
And turn th' event, confounding human pride:
Some he destroy'd, some scatter'd as the dust;
(Not all were prudent, and not all were just;)
Then Discord, sent by Pallas from above, 165
Stern daughter of the great avenger Jove,
The brother-kings inspir'd with fell debate;
Who call'd to council all th' Achaïan state,
But call'd untimely: (not the sacred rite
Observ'd, nor heedful of the setting light, 170
Nor herald from the session to proclaim;)
Sour with debauch, a reeling tribe they came.
To these the cause of meeting they explain,
And Menelaus moves to cross the main;

Not so the king of men: he will'd to stay ; 175
 The sacred rites and hecatombs to pay,
 And calm Minerva's wrath. Oh blind to fate!
 The gods not lightly change their love, or hate.
 With ireful taunts each other they oppose,
 Till in loud tumult all the Greeks arose. 180
 Now different counsels ev'ry breast divide,
 Each burns with rancour to the adverse side :
 'Th' unquiet night strange projects entertain'd :
 (So Jove, that urg'd us to our fate, ordain'd.)
 We with the rising morn our ships unmoor'd, 185
 And brought our captives and our stores aboard ;
 But half the people with respect obey'd
 'The king of men, and at his bidding stay'd.
 Now on the wings of winds our course we keep,
 (For God hath smooth'd the waters of the deep.) 190
 For Tenedos we spread our eager oars,
 There land, and pay due victims to the pow'rs ;
 To bless our safe return we join in pray'r,
 But angry Jove dispers'd our vows in air,
 And rais'd new discord. Then (so heav'n decreed)
 Ulysses first and Nestor disagreed, 196
 Wise as he was, by various counsels sway'd,
 He there, tho' late, to please the monarch, stay'd.
 But I, determin'd stem the foamy floods,
 Warn'd of the coming fury of the gods. 200
 With us, Tydides fear'd and urg'd his haste,
 And Menelaus came, but came the last.
 He join'd our vessels in the Lesbian bay,
 While yet we doubted of our wat'ry way ;
 If to the right to urge the pilot's toil, 205
 (The safer road) beside the Psyrian isle :
 Or the streight course to rocky Chios plow,
 And anchor under Mimas' shaggy brow :
 We sought direction of the pow'r divine :
 The god propitious gave the guiding sign ; 210
 Thro' the mid seas he bids our navy steer,
 And in Eubœa shun the woes we fear,
 The whistling winds already wak'd the sky ;
 Before the whistling winds the vessels fly,
 With rapid swiftmess cut the liquid way, 215
 And reach Gerestes at the point of day.

There hecatombs of bulls, to Neptune slain,
 High flaming, please the monarch of the main.
 The fourth day shone, when all their labours o'er,
 Tydides' vessel touch'd the wish'd-for shore ; 220
 But I to Pylos scud before the gales,
 The god still breathing on the swelling sails ;
 Sep'rate from all, I safely landed here ;
 Their fates or fortunes never reach'd my ear.
 Yet what I learn'd, attend ; as here I sat, 225 }
 And ask'd each voyager each hero's fate,
 Curious to know, and willing to relate. }

Safe reach'd the Myrmidons their native land,
 Beneath Achilles' warlike son's command.
 Those, whom the heir of great Apollo's art, 230
 Brave Philoctetes, taught to wing the dart ;
 And those whom Idomen from Ilion's plain
 Had led, securely crost the dreadful main.
 How Agamemnon touch'd his Argive coast,
 And how his life by fraud and force he lost, 235
 And how the murd'rer paid his forfeit breath ;
 What lands so distant from that scene of death.
 But trembling heard the fame ? and heard admire
 How well the son appeas'd his slaughter'd sire !
 Ev'n to th' unhappy, that unjustly bleed, 240
 Heav'n gives posterity t' avenge the deed.
 So fell Agysthus ; and may'st thou, my friend,
 (On whom th' virtues of thy sire descend,)
 Make future times thy equal act adore,
 And be what brave Orestes was before ! 245
 The prudent youth reply'd. O thou the grace
 And lasting glory of the Grecian race !
 Just was the vengeance, and to latest days
 Shall long posterity resound the praise.
 Some god this arm with equal prowess bless ! 250
 And the proud suitors shall its force confess :
 Injurious men ! who while my soul is sore
 Of fresh affronts, are meditating 'more.
 But heav'n denies this honour to my hand,
 Nor shall my father repossess the land : 255
 The father's fortune never to return,
 And the sad son's to suffer and to mourn !

Thus he ; and Nestor took the word : My son,
 Is it then true, as distant rumours run,
 That crowds of rivals for thy mother's charms 260
 Thy palace fill with insults and alarms ?
 Say, is the fault, thro' tame submission, thine ?
 Or leagu'd against thee, do thy people join,
 Mov'd by some oracle, or voice divine ? }
 And yet who knows, but rip'ning lies in fate, 265
 An hour of vengeance for th' afflicted state ;
 When great Ulysses shall suppress these harms,
 Ulysses singly, or all Greece in arms.
 But if Athena, war's triumphant maid,
 The happy son, will, as the father, aid, 270
 (Whose fame and safety was her constant care
 In ev'ry danger, and in ev'ry war :
 Never on man did heav'nly favour shine
 With rays so strong, distinguish'd and divine,
 As those with which Minerva mark'd thy sire,) 275
 So might she love thee, so thy soul inspire !
 Soon should their hopes in humble dust be laid,
 And long oblivion of the bridal bed.

Ah ! no such hope (the prince with sighs replies)
 Can touch my breast ; that blessing heav'n denies. 280
 Ev'n by celestial favour were it giv'n,
 Fortune or fate would cross the will of heav'n.

What words are these, and what imprudence thine ?
 (Thus interpos'd the martial maid divine :)
 Forgetful youth ! but know, the pow'r above 285
 With ease can save each object of his love ;
 Wide as his will, extends his boundless grace :
 Nor lost in time, nor circumscrib'd by place ;
 Happier his lot, who many sorrows past,
 Long lab'ring gains his natal shore at last ; 290
 Than who, too speedy, hastes to end his life
 By some stern ruffian, or adult'rous wife !
 Death only is the lot which none can miss,
 And all is possible to heav'n but this.
 The best, the dearest fav'rite of the sky 295
 Must taste that cup, for man is born to die.
 Thus check'd, reply'd Ulysses' prudent heir :
 Mentor, no more—the mournful thought forbear :

For he no more must draw his country's breath,
 Already snatch'd by fate, and the black doom of death !
 Pass we to other subjects ; and engage 301

On themes remote the venerable sage :
 (Who thrice has seen the perishable kind
 Of men decay, and thro' three ages shin'd,
 Like gods majestic, and like gods in mind.) 305 }

For much he knows, and just conclusions draws
 From various precedents, and various laws.
 O son of Neleus ! awful Nestor, tell
 How he, the mighty Agamemnon fell ?
 By what strange fraud Ægysthus wrought, relate, 310
 (By force he could not) such a hero's fate ?
 Liv'd Menelaus not in Greece ! or where
 Was then the martial brother's pious care ?
 Condemn'd perhaps some foreign shore to tread ;
 Or sure Ægysthus had not dar'd the deed. 315

To whom the full of days. Illustrious youth,
 Attend (tho' partly thou hast guest) the truth,
 For had the martial Menelaus found
 The ruffian breathing yet on Argive ground ;
 Nor earth had hid his carcase from the skies, 320
 Nor Grecian virgin shriek'd his obsequies,
 But fowls obscene dismember'd his remains,
 And dogs had torn him on the naked plains.

While us the works of bloody Mars employ'd,
 The wanton youth inglorious peace enjoy'd ; 325
 He stretch'd at ease in Argos calm recess,
 (Whose stately steeds luxuriant pastures bless,)
 With flattery's insinuating art
 Sooth'd the frail queen, and poison'd all her heart.

At first with worthy shame and decent pride, 330
 The royal dame his lawless suit deny'd.
 For virtue's image yet possess her mind,
 Taught by a master of the tuneful kind :

Atrides, parting for the Trojan war,
 Consign'd the youthful consort to his care. 335
 True to his charge, the bard preserv'd her long
 In honour's limits ; such the pow'r of song.

But when the gods these objects of their hate
 Dragg'd to destruction, by the links of fate ;

The bard they banish'd from his native soil, 340
 And left all helpless in a desert isle :
 There he, the sweetest of the sacred train,
 Sung dying to the rocks, but sung in vain.
 Then virtue was no more ; her guard away,
 She fell, to lust a voluntary prey. 345
 Ev'n to the temple stalk'd th' adult'rous spouse,
 With impious thanks and mockery of vows.
 With images, with garments, and with gold,
 And od'rous fumes from loaded altars roll'd.
 Meantime from flaming Troy we cut the way, 350
 With Menelaus, thro' the curling sea.
 But when to Sunium's sacred point we came,
 Crown'd with the temple of th' Athenian dame ;
 Atrides' pilot, Phrontes, there expir'd ;
 (Phrontes, of all the sons of men admir'd 355
 To steer the bounding bark with steady toil,
 When the storm thickens, and the billows boil,)
 While yet he exercis'd the steersman's art,
 Apollo touch'd him with his gentle dart ;
 Ev'n with the rudder in his hand he fell, 360
 To pay whose honours to the shades of hell,
 We check'd our haste, by pious office bound,
 And laid our old companion in the ground.
 And now, the rites discharg'd, our course we keep
 Far on the gloomy bosom of the deep : 365
 Soon as Malæa's misty tops arise,
 Sudden the Thund'rer blackens all the skies.
 And the winds whistle, and the surges roll
 Mountains on mountains, and obscure the pole.
 The tempest scatters, and divides our fleet ; 370
 Part, the storm urges on the coast of Crete,
 Where, winding round the rich Cydonian plain,
 The streams of Jordan issue to the main.
 There stands a rock, high, eminent and steep,
 Whose shaggy brow o'erhangs the shadow deep, 375
 And views Gortyna on the western side ;
 On this rough Auster drove th' impetuous tide ;
 With broken force the billows roll'd away,
 And heav'd the fleet into the neighb'ring bay.
 Thus sav'd from death, they gain'd the Phæstan shores,
 With shatter'd vessels, and disabled oars ; 381

But five tall barks the winds and waters tost,
 Far from their fellows on the Ægyptian coast.
 There wander'd Menelaus thro' foreign shores,
 Amassing gold, and gath'ring naval stores; 385
 While curst Ægysthus the detested deed
 By fraud fulfill'd, and his great brother bled.
 Sev'n years, the traitor rich Mycenæ sway'd,
 And his stern rule the groaning land obey'd;
 The eighth, from Athens to his realm restor'd, 390
 Orestes brandish'd the revenging sword,
 Slew the dire pair, and gave to fun'ral flame
 The vile assassin, and adult'rous dame.
 That day, ere yet the bloody triumphs cease,
 Return'd Atrides to the coast of Greece, 395
 And safe to Argos' port his navy brought,
 With gifts of price and pond'rous treasure fraught.
 Hence warn'd, my son beware! nor idly stand
 Too long a stranger to thy native land;
 Lest heedless absence wear thy wealth away, 400
 While lawless feasters in thy palace sway;
 Perhaps may seize thy realm, and share the spoil,
 And thou return, with disappointed toil, }
 From thy vain journey, to a rifled isle. }
 Howe'er, my friend, indulge one labour more, 405
 And seek Atrides on the Spartan shore.
 He, wand'ring long, a wider circle made,
 And many-languag'd nations has survey'd;
 And measur'd tracts unknown to other ships,
 Amid the monstrous wonders of the deeps; 410
 (A length of ocean and unbounded sky,
 Which scarce the sea-fowl in a year o'erfly:)
 Go then; to Sparta take the wat'ry way,
 Thy ship and sailors but for orders stay;
 Or if by land thou chuse thy course to bend, 415
 My steeds, my chariots, and my sons attend:
 Thee to Atrides they shall safe convey,
 Guides of thy road, companions of thy way.
 Urge him with truth to frame his free replies,
 And sure he will: for Menelaus is wise. 420
 Thus while he speaks, the ruddy sun descends,
 And twilight grey her evening shade extends.

Then thus the blue-ey'd maid : O full of days !
 Wise are thy words, and just are all thy ways.
 Now immolate the tongues, and mix the wine, 425
 Sacred to Neptune and the pow'rs divine.
 The lamp of day is quench'd beneath the deep,
 And soft approach the balmy hours of sleep :
 Nor fits it to prolong the heav'nly feast,
 Timeless, indecent, but retire to rest. 430
 So spake Jove's daughter the celestial maid,
 The sober train attended and obey'd.
 The sacred heralds on their hands around
 Pour'd the full urns ; the youths the goblets crown'd :
 From bowl to bowl the holy bev'rage flows ; 435
 While to the final sacrifice they rose.
 The tongues they cast upon the fragrant flame,
 And pour, above, the consecrated stream.
 And now, their thirst by copious draughts allay'd,
 The youthful hero and the Athenian maid 440
 Propose departure from the finish'd rite,
 And in their hollow bark to pass the night :
 But this the hospitable sage deny'd,
 Forbid it, Jove ! and all the gods ! he cry'd,
 Thus from my walls the much-lov'd son to send 445
 Of such a hero, and of such a friend !
 Me, as some needy peasant, would ye leave,
 Whom heav'n denies the blessing to relieve ?
 Me would ye leave, who boast imperial sway,
 When beds of royal state invite your stay ? 450
 No—long as life this mortal shall inspire,
 Or as my children imitate their sire,
 Here shall the wand'ring stranger find his home,
 And hospitable rites adorn the dome.
 Well hast thou spoke, (the blue-ey'd maid replies,)
 Belov'd old man ! benevolent, as wise. 456
 Be the kind dictates of thy heart obey'd,
 And let thy words Telemachus persuade :
 He to thy palace shall thy steps pursue ;
 I to the ship, to give the orders due, 460 }
 Prescribe directions, and confirm the crew.
 For I alone sustain their naval cares,
 Who boast experience from these silver hairs ;

All youths the rest, whom to this journey move
 Like years, like tempers, and their prince's love. 465
 There in the vessel shall I pass the night;
 And soon as morning paints the fields of light,
 I go to challenge from the Caucons bold,
 A debt, contracted in the days of old.
 But this thy guest, receiv'd with friendly care, 470
 Let thy strong coursers swift to Sparta bear;
 Prepare thy chariot at the dawn of day,
 And by thy son companion of his way.
 Then turning with the word, Minerva flies,
 And soars an eagle thro' the liquid skies, 475
 Vision divine! the throng'd spectators gaze,
 In holy wonder fixt and still amaze.
 But chief the rev'rend sage admir'd; he took
 The hand of young Telemachus, and spoke.
 Oh happy youth! and favour'd of the skies, 480
 Distinguish'd care of guardian deities!
 Whose early years for future worth engage
 No vulgar manhood, no ignoble age:
 For lo! none other of the court above
 Than she, the daughter of Almighty Jove, 485
 Pallas herself, the war-triumphant maid,
 Confest is thine, as once thy father's aid.
 So guide me, goddess! so propitious shine
 On me, my consort, and my royal line!
 A yearling bullock to thy name shall smoke 490
 Untam'd, unconscious of the galling yoke,
 With ample forehead, and yet tender horns,
 Whose budding honours ductile gold adorns.
 Submissive thus the hoary sire prefer'd
 His holy vow: the fav'ring goddess heard. 495
 Then slowly rising, o'er the sandy space
 Precedes the father, follow'd by his race,
 (A long procession) timely marching home
 In comely order to the regal dome.
 There, when arriv'd, on thrones around him plac'd,
 His sons and grandsons the wide circle grac'd. 501
 To these the hospitable sage, in sign
 Of social welcome, mix'd the racy wine:
 Late from the mellowing cask restor'd to light,
 By ten long years refin'd, and rosy bright). 505

To Pallas high the foaming bowl he crown'd,
And sprinkled large libations on the ground.
Each drinks a full oblivion of his cares,
And to the gifts of balmy sleep repairs.
Deep in a rich alcove the prince was laid, 510
And slept beneath the pompous colonade;
Fast by his side Pisistratus lay spread,
(In age his equal), on a splendid bed:
But in an inner court, securely clos'd,
The rev'rend Nestor and his queen repos'd. 515

When now Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
With rosy lustre purpled o'er the lawn:
The old man early rose, walk'd forth, and sat
On polish'd stone before his palace gate:
With unguents smooth the lucid marble shone, 520
Where ancient Neleus sat, a rustic throne;
But he descending to th' infernal shade,
Sage Nestor fill'd it, and the sceptre sway'd.
His sons around him mild obeisance pay,
And duteous take the orders of the day. 525

First Echephron and Stratius quit their bed;
Then Perseus, Aretus, and Thrasymed;
The last Pisistratus arose from rest:
They came, and near him plac'd the stranger guest.
To these the senior thus declar'd his will: 530
My sons! the dictates of your sire fulfil.
To Pallas, first of gods, prepare the feast,
Who grac'd our rites, a more than mortal guest.
Let one, dispatchful, bid some swain to lead
A well-fed bullock from the grassy mead; 535
One seek the harbour where the vessels moor,
And bring thy friends, Telemachus! ashore,
(Leave only two the galley to attend);
Another to Laerceus must we send,
Artist divine, whose skilful hands infold 540
The victim's horn with circumfusile gold.
The rest may here the pious duty share,
And bid the handmaids for the feast prepare,
The seats to range, the fragrant wood to bring,
And limpid waters from the living spring. 545

He said, and busy each his care bestow'd;
Already at the gates the bullock low'd,

ready came the Ithacensian crew,
 the dext'rous smith the tools already drew :
 the pond'rous hammer, and his anvil sound, 550
 and the strong tongs to turn the metal round.
 Minerva absent from the rite,
 view'd her honours, and enjoy'd the sight.
 The rev'rend hand the king presents the gold,
 which round th' intorted horns the gilder roll'd ;
 wrought, as Pallas might with pride behold. 556 }
 And Aretus from forth his bridal-bow'r
 brought the full laver, o'er their hands to pour,
 and cannisters of consecrated flour. }
 And Anticleus and Echephron the victim led ; 560
 the ox was held by warlike Thrasymed,
 ready to strike : before him Perseus stood,
 the vase extending to receive the blood.
 The king himself initiates to the pow'r ;
 and with quiv'ring hand the sacred flour, 565
 and the stream sprinkles : from the curling brows
 the hair collected in the fire he throws.
 When as due vows on ev'ry part were paid,
 and sacred wheat upon the victim laid.
 Young Thrasymed discharg'd the speeding blow 570
 and on his neck, and cut the nerves in two.
 Down sunk the heavy beast : the females round,
 maids, wives, and matrons, mix a shrilling sound.
 He scorn'd the queen the holy choir to join,
 the first-born she, of old Clymenus' line ; 575
 youth by Nestor lov'd of spotless fame,
 and lov'd in age, Eurydice her name),
 from earth they rear him, struggling now with death ;
 and Nestor's youngest stops the vents of breath.
 The soul for ever flies : on all sides round 580
 streams the black blood, and smokes upon the ground.
 The beast they then divide, and disunite
 the ribs and limbs, observant of the rite :
 and these, in double cawls involv'd with art,
 the choicest morsels lay from ev'ry part. 585
 The sacred sage before his altar stands,
 turns the burnt-off'ring with his holy hands,
 and pours the wine, and bids the flames aspire :
 the youth with instruments surround the fire.

- The thighs now sacrific'd, and entrails drest, 590
 Th' assistants part transfix, and broil the rest.
 While these officious tend the rites divine,
 The last fair branch of the Nestorean line,
 Sweet Polycaste, took the pleasing toil
 To bathe the prince, and pour the fragrant oil. 595
 O'er his fair limbs a flow'ry vest he threw,
 And issu'd, like a god, to mortal view.
 His former seat beside the king he found,
 (His people's father, with his peers around);
 All plac'd at ease the holy banquet join, 600
 And in the dazzling goblet laughs the wine.
 The rage of thirst and hunger now suppress,
 The monarch turns him to his royal guest;
 And for the promis'd journey bids prepare
 The smooth-hair'd horses, and the rapid car. 605
 Observant of his word, the word scarce spoke,
 The sons obey, and join them to the yoke.
 Then bread and wine a ready handmaid brings,
 And presents, such as suit the state of kings.
 The glitt'ring seat Telemachus ascends; 610
 His faithful guide Pisistratus attends;
 With hasty hand the ruling reins he drew;
 He lash'd the coursers, and the coursers flew.
 Beneath the bounding yoke alike they held,
 Their equal pace, and smok'd along the field. 615
 The tow'rs of Pylos sink, its views decay,
 Fields after fields fly back, till close of day:
 Then sunk the sun, and darken'd all the way. }
 To Pheræ now, Diocleus' stately seat,
 (Of Alpheus' race), the weary youths retreat. 620
 His house affords the hospitable rite,
 And pleas'd they sleep, the blessing of the night),
 But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 With rosy lustre purpled o'er the lawn;
 Again they mount, their journey to renew, 625
 And from the sounding portico they flew.
 Along the waving fields their way they hold,
 The fields receding as the chariot roll'd:
 Then slowly sunk the ruddy globe of light,
 And o'er the shaded landscape rush'd the night. 630

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK IV.

The Argument.

The conference with Menelaus.

TELEMACHUS with Pisistratus arriving at Sparta, is hospitably received by Menelaus, to whom he relates the cause of his coming and learns from him many particulars of what befel the Greeks since the destruction of Troy. He dwells more at large upon the prophecies of Proteus to him in his return, from which he acquaints Telemachus, that Ulysses is detained in the island of Calypso.

In the mean time the suitors consult to destroy Telemachus in his voyage home. Penelope is apprised of this, but comforted in a dream by Pallas, in the shape of her sister Iphima.

AND now proud Sparta with their wheels resounds,
Sparta whose walls a range of hills surrounds :
At the fair dome the rapid labour ends ;
Where sat Atrides, 'midst his bridal friends,
With double vows invoking Hymen's pow'r, 5
To bless his sons and daughters nuptial hour.

That day, to great Achilles' son resign'd,
Hermione (the fairest of her kind)
Was sent to crown the long-protracted joy,
Espous'd before the final doom of Troy : 10
With steeds and gilded cars, a gorgeous train,
Attend the nymph to Phthia's distant reign.
Meanwhile at home, to Megapenthes' bed
The virgin-choir Alector's daughter led.
Brave Megapenthes, from a stol'n amour 15
To great Atrides' age his handmaid bore :
To Helen's bed the gods alone assign
Hermione, t' extend the regal line ;

On whom a radiant pomp of graces wait,
 Resembling Venus in attractive state. 20

While this gay friendly troop the king surround,
 With festival and mirth the roofs resound ;
 A bard amid the joyous circle sings
 High airs, attemper'd to the vocal strings ;
 Whilst, warbling to the varied strain, advance 25
 Two sprightly youths to form the bounding dance.

'Twas then, that issuing thro' the palace gate
 The spledid car roll'd slow in regal state :
 On the bright eminence young Nestor shone.
 And fast beside him great Ulysses' son : 30

Grave Eteoneus saw the pomp appear,
 And, speeding, thus address the royal ear.
 Two youths approach, whose semblant features prove
 Their blood devolving from the source of Jove.

In due reception deign'd, or must they bend 35

Their doubtful course to seek a distant friend ?
 Insensate ! (with a sigh the king replies,)
 Too long mis-judging, have I thought thee wise :
 But sure relentless folly steels thy breast,

Obdurate to reject the stranger guest ; 40
 To these dear hospitable rites a foe,

Which in my wand'rings oft reliev'd my woe :

Fed by the bounty of another's board,

Till pitying Jove my native realm restor'd——

Straight be the coursers from the car releast, 45

Conduct the youths to grace the genial feast.

The seneschal rebuk'd in haste withdrew ;

With equal haste a menial train pursue :

Part led the coursers, from the car enlarg'd,
 Each to a crib with choicest grain surcharg'd, 50

Part in a portico, profusely grac'd

With rich magnificence, the chariot plac'd :

Then to the dome the friendly pair invite,
 Who eye the dazzling roofs with vast delight ;

Resplendent as the blaze of summer noon, 55

Or the pale radiance of the midnight moon.

From room to room their eager view they bend ;

Thence to the bath, a beauteous pile descend ;

Where a bright damsel-train attend the guests

With liquid odours, and embroider'd vests.

Refresh'd, they wait them to the bow'r of state,
Where circled with his peers Atrides sat :
Thron'd next the king, a fair attendant brings
The purest products of the crystal springs ;
High on a massy vase of silver mold,
The burnish'd laver flames with solid gold :
In solid gold the purple vintage flows,
And on the board a second banquet rose.
When thus the king with hospitable port : —
Accept this welcome to the Spartan court ;
The waste of nature let the feast repair,
Then your high lineage and your names declare :
Say from what scepter'd ancestry your claim,
Recorded eminent in deathless fame ?
For vulgar parents cannot stamp their race
With signatures of such majestic grace.

67

70

75

Ceasing, benevolent, he straight assigns
The royal portion of the choicest wines
To each accepted friend : with grateful haste
They share the honours of the rich repast.
Suffic'd, soft-whisp'ring thus to Nestor's son,
His head reclin'd, young Ithacus begun.

80

View'st thou unmov'd, O ever-honour'd most !
These prodigies of art, and wond'rous cost !
Above, beneath, around the palace shines
The sumless treasure of exhausted mines :
The spoils of elephants the roofs inlay,
And studded amber darts a golden ray :
Such, and not nobler, in the realms above
My wonder dictates is the dome of Jove.

85

90

The monarch took the word, and grave reply'd.
Presumptuous are the vaunts, and vain the pride
Of man, who dares in pomp with Jove contest,
Unchang'd, immortal, and supremely blest ?
With all my affluence when my woes are weigh'd,
Envy will own, the purchase dearly paid.
For eight slow-circling years by tempest tost,
From Cyprus to the fair Phœnician coast,
(Sidon the capital,) I stretch'd my toil
'Thro' regions fatten'd with the flows of Nile.
Next Æthiopia's utmost bound explore,
And the parch'd borders of th' Arabian shore :

95

Then warp my voyage on the southern gales,
 O'er the warm Libyan wave to spread my sails:
 That happy clime! where each revolving year 105
 The teeming ewes a triple offspring bear;
 And two fair crescents of translucent horn
 The brows of all their young increase adorn;
 The shepherd swains, with sure abundance blest,
 On the fat flock and rural dainties feast; 110
 Nor want of herbage makes the dairy fail,
 But ev'ry season fills the foaming pail.
 Whilst, heaping unwish'd wealth, I distant roam,
 The best of brothers, at his natal home,
 By the dire fury of a traitress wife, 115
 Ends the sad ev'ning of a stormy life:
 Whence with incessant grief my soul annoy'd,
 These riches are possess'd but not enjoy'd!
 My wars, the copious theme of ev'ry tongue,
 To you, your fathers have recorded long: 120
 How fav'ring heav'n repaid my glorious toils
 With a sack'd palace, and barbaric spoils.
 Oh! had the gods so large a boon deny'd,
 And life, the just equivalent, supply'd
 To those brave warriors, who, with glory fir'd, 125
 Far from their country in my cause expir'd!
 Still in short intervals of pleasing woe,
 Regardful of the friendly dues I owe,
 I to the glorious dead, for ever dear!
 Indulge the tribute of a grateful tear. 130
 But oh! Ulysses—deeper than the rest,
 That sad idea wounds my anxious breast!
 My heart bleeds fresh with agonizing pain;
 The bowl, and tasteful viands tempt in vain,
 Nor sleep's soft pow'r can close my streaming eyes, 135
 When imag'd to my soul his sorrows rise.
 No peril in my cause he ceas'd to prove,
 His labour's equal'd only by my love:
 And both alike to bitter fortune born,
 For him to suffer and for me to mourn! 140
 Whether he wanders on some friendless coast,
 Or glides in Stygian gloom a pensive ghost,
 No fame reveals; but doubtful of his doom,
 His good old sire with sorrow to the tomb

Declines his trembling steps; untimely care 145
 Withers the blooming vigour of his heir;
 And the chaste partner of his bed and throne,
 Wastes all her widow'd hours in tender moan.

While thus pathetic to the prince he spoke,
 From the brave youth the streaming passion broke: 150
 Studious to veil the grief, in vain repress,
 His face he shrouded with his purple vest.
 The conscious monarch pierc'd the coy disguise,
 And view'd his filial love with vast surprise;
 Dubious to press the tender theme, or wait 155
 To hear the youth inquire his father's fate.

In this suspense bright Helen grac'd the room;
 Before her breath'd a gale of rich perfume.
 So moves, adorn'd with each attractive grace,
 The silver-shafted goddess of the chace! 160

The seat of majesty Adraste brings,
 With art illustrious, for the pomp of kings.
 To spread the pall (beneath the regal chair)
 Of softest wool, is bright Alcippe's care. 165

A silver cannister divinely wrought,
 In her soft hands the beauteous Phylo brought:
 To Sparta's queen of old the radiant vase
 Alcandra gave, a pledge of royal grace:

For Polybus her lord, (whose sov'reign sway
 The wealthy tribes of Pharian Thebes obey,) 170
 When to that court Atrides came, carest
 With vast munificence th' imperial guest!

Two lavers from the richest ore refin'd,
 With silver tripods, the kind host assign'd;
 And bounteous, from the royal treasure told 175
 Ten equal talents of refulgent gold.

Alcandra, consort of his high command,
 A golden distaff gave to Helen's hand;
 And that rich vase, with living sculpture wrought,
 Which heap'd with wool the beauteous Phylo brought:

The silken fleece impurpl'd for the loom, 181
 Rival'd the hyacinth in vernal bloom.

The sov'reign seat then Jove-born Helen press'd,
 And pleasing thus her scepter'd lord address'd.

Who grace our palace now? that friendly pair, 185
 Speak they their lineage, or their names declare?

Uncertain of the truth, yet uncontroll'd
 Hear me the bodings of my breast unfold.
 With wonder rapt, on yonder cheek I trace
 The features of the Ulyssean race : 190
 Diffus'd o'er each resembling line appear,
 In just similitude, the grace and air
 Of young Telemachus! the lovely boy,
 Who bless'd Ulysses with a father's joy.
 What time the Greeks combin'd their social arms,
 T' avenge the stain of my ill-fated charms! 196
 Just is thy thought, the king assenting cries,
 Methinks Ulysses strikes my wond'ring eyes:
 Full shines the father in the filial frame,
 His port, his features, and his shape the same : 200
 Such quick regards his sparkling eyes bestow;
 Such wavy ringlets o'er his shoulders flow!
 And when he heard the long disastrous store
 Of cares, which in my cause Ulysses bore;
 Dismay'd, heart-wounded with paternal woes, 205
 Above restraint the tide of sorrow rose:
 Cautious to let the gushing grief appear,
 His purple garment veil'd the falling tear.
 See there confest, Pisistratus replies,
 The genuine worth of Ithacus the wise! 210
 Of that heroic sire the youth is sprung,
 But modest awe hath chain'd his tim'rous tongue.
 Thy voice, O king! with pleas'd attention heard,
 Is like the dictates of a god rever'd.
 With him at Nestor's high command I came, 215
 Whose age I honour with a parent's name.
 By adverse destiny constrain'd to sue
 For council and redress, he sues to you.
 Whatever ill the friendless orphan bears,
 Bereav'd of parents in his infant years, 220
 Still must the wrong'd Telemachus sustain,
 If hopeful of your aid, he hopes in vain:
 Affianc'd in your friendly pow'r alone,
 The youth would vindicate the vacant throne.
 In Sparta blest, and these desiring eyes 225
 View my friend's son? (the king exulting cries:)
 Son of my friend, by glorious toils approv'd,
 Whose sword was sacred to the man he lov'd:

Mirrour of constant faith, rever'd and mourn'd!—
 When Troy was ruin'd, had the chief return'd, 230
 No Greek an equal space had e'er possess'd,
 Of dear affection, in my grateful breast.
 I, to confirm the mutual joys we shar'd,
 For his abode a capital prepar'd;
 Argos the seat of sov'reign rule I chose; 235
 Fair in the plan the future palace rose,
 Where my Ulysses and his race might reign,
 And portion to his tribes the wide domain.
 To them my vassals had resign'd a soil,
 With teeming plenty to reward their toil. 240
 There with commutual zeal we both had strove
 In acts of dear benevolence, and love:
 Brothers in peace, not rivals in command,
 And death alone dissolv'd the friendly band!
 Some envious pow'r the blissful scene destroys; 245
 Vanish'd are all the visionary joys:
 The soul of friendship to my hope is lost,
 Fated to wander from his natal coast!
 He ceas'd; a gust of grief began to rise:
 Fast streams a tide from beauteous Helen's eyes; 250
 Fast for the sire the filial sorrows flow:
 The weeping monarch swells the mighty woe:
 Thy cheeks, Pisistratus, the tears bedew,
 While pictur'd to thy mind appear'd in view
 Thy martial * brother: on the Phrygian plain 255
 Extended pale, by swarthy Memnon slain!
 But silence from the son of Nestor broke,
 And melting with fraternal pity spoke.
 Frequent, O king, was Nestor wont to raise
 And charm attention with thy copious praise: 260
 To crown thy various gifts, the sage assign'd
 The glory of a firm capacious mind:
 With that superior attribute controul
 This unavailing impotence of soul.
 Let not your roof with echoing grief resound, 265
 Now for the feast the friendly bowl is crown'd:
 But when from dewy shade emerging bright,
 Aurora streaks the sky with orient light,
 Let each deplore his dead; the rites of woe
 Are all, alas! the living can bestow: 270

* Antilochus.

O'er the congenial dust injoin'd to shear
 The graceful curl, and drop the tender tear.
 Then mingling in the mournful pomp with you,
 I'll pay my brother's ghost a warrior's due,
 And mourn the brave Antilochus, a name 275
 Not unrecorded in the rolls of fame :
 With strength and speed superior form'd, in fight
 To face the foe, or intercept his flight :
 Too early snatch'd by fate ere known to me !
 I boast a witness of his worth in thee. 280
 Young and mature ! the monarch thus rejoins,
 In thee renew'd the soul of Nestor shines :
 Form'd by the care of that consummate sage,
 In early bloom an oracle of age.
 Whene'er his influence Jove vouchsafes to show'r 285
 To bless the natal and the nuptial hour ;
 From the great sire transmissive to the race,
 The boon devolving gives distinguish'd grace.
 Such, happy Nestor ! was thy glorious doom :
 Around thee full of years, thy offspring bloom, 290
 Expert of arms, and prudent in debate ;
 The gifts of heav'n to guard thy hoary state.
 But now let each becalm his troubled breast,
 Wash, and partake serene the friendly feast.
 To move thy suit, Telemachus delay, 295
 Till heav'n's revolving lamp restores the day.
 He said, Asphalion swift the laver brings ;
 Alternate all partake the grateful springs :
 'Then from the rites of purity repair,
 And with keen gust the sav'ry viands share. 300
 Mean time with genial joy to warm the soul,
 Bright Helen mix'd a mirth-inspiring bowl :
 Temper'd with drugs of sov'reign use, t' assuage
 The boiling bosom of tumultuous rage ;
 To clear the cloudy front of wrinkled care, 305
 And dry the tearful sluices of despair :
 Charm'd with that virtuous draught, th' exalted mind
 All sense of woe delivers to the wind.
 Tho' on the blazing pile his parent lay,
 Or a lov'd brother groan'd his life away, 310
 Or darling son, oppress'd by ruffian force,
 Fell breathless at his feet, a mangled corse ;

From morn to eve, impassive and serene,
The man entranc'd would view the deathful scene,
These drugs so friendly to the joys of life, 315
Bright Helen learn'd from Thone's imperial wife ;
Who sway'd the sceptre where prolific Nile
With various simples clothes the fatten'd soil.
With wholesome herbage mix'd, the direful bane
Of vegetable venom, taints the plain ; 320
From Pæon sprung, their patron-god imparts
To all the Pharian race his healing arts.
The bev'rage now prepar'd t' inspire the feast,
The circle thus the beauteous queen address.
Thron'd in omnipotence, supremest Jove 325
Tempers the fates of human race above ;
By the firm sanction of his sov'reign will,
Alternate are decreed our good or ill.
To feastful mirth be this white hour assign'd,
And sweet discourse, the banquet of the mind. 330
Myself assisting in the social joy,
Will tell 'Ulysses' bold exploit in Troy :
Sole witness of the deed I now declare :
Speak you (who saw) his wonders in the war.
Seam'd o'er with wounds, which his own sabre gave,
In the vile habit of a village slave, 336
The foe deceiv'd, he pass'd the tented plain,
In Troy to mingle with the hostile train.
In this attire secure from searching eyes,
Till haply piercing thro' the dark disguise 340
The chief I challeng'd ; he, whose practis'd wit
Knew all the serpent mazes of deceit,
Eludes my search : but when his form I view'd
Fresh from the bath with fragrant oils renew'd,
His limbs in military purple dress'd, 345
Each bright'ning grace the genuine Greek confess'd.
A previous pledge of sacred faith obtain'd,
Till he the lines and Argive fleet regain'd,
To keep his stay conceal'd ; the chief declar'd
The plans of war against the town prepar'd. 350
Exploring then the secrets of the state ;
He learn'd what best might urge the Dardan fate ;
And safe returning to the Grecian host,
Sent many a shade to Pluto's dreary coast.

Loud grief resounded thro' the tow'rs of Troy, 355
But my pleas'd bosom glow'd with secret joy :
For then with dire remorse, and conscious shame,
I view'd th' effects of that disastrous flame,
Which, kindled by th' imperious queen of love,
Constrain'd me from my native realm to rove : 360
And oft in bitterness of soul deplor'd
My absent daughter, and my dearer lord ;
Admir'd among the first of human race,
For ev'ry gift of mind, and manly grace.

Right well, reply'd the king, your speech displays
The matchless merit of the chief you praise : 366
Heroes in various climes myself have found,
For martial deeds, and depth of thought renown'd :
But Ithacus, unrival'd in his claim,
May boast a title to the loudest fame : 370
In battle calm, he guides the rapid storm,
Wise to resolve and patient to perform.
What wond'rous conduct in the chief appear'd,
When the vast fabric of the steed we rear'd,
Some dæmon, anxious for the Trojan doom, 375
Urg'd you with great Deiphobus to come,
T' explore the fraud ; with guile oppos'd to guile,
Slow-pacing thrice around th' insidious pile ;
Each noted leader's name you thrice invoke
Your accent varying as their spouses spoke : 380
The pleasing sounds each latent warrior warm'd,
But most Tydides' and my heart alarm'd :
To quit the steed we both impatient press,
Threat'ning to answer from the dark recess.
Unmov'd the mind of Ithacus remain'd, 385
And the vain ardours of our love restrain'd ;
But Anticlus, unable to controul,
Spoke loud the language of his yearning soul ;
Ulysses straight with indignation fir'd,
(For so the common care of Greece requir'd,) 390
Firm to his lips his forceful hands apply'd,
Till on his tongue the slutt'ring murmurs dy'd.
Meantime Minerva, from the fraudulent horse,
Back to the court of Priam bent your course.
Inclement fate ! Telemachus replies ; 395
Frail is the boasted attribute of wise ;

The leader mingling with the vulgar host,
Is in the common mass of matter lost !
But now let sleep the painful waste repair
Of sad reflection and corroding care. 400

He ceas'd : the menial fair that round her wait,
At Helen's back, prepare the room of state :
Beneath an ample portico they spread
The downy fleece, to form the slumb'rous bed ;
And o'er soft palls of purple grain, unfold 405
Rich tapestry, stiff with inwoven gold ;
'Then thro' th' illumin'd dome to balmy rest,
Th' obsequious herald guides each princely guest ;
While to his regal bow'r the king ascends,
And beauteous Helen on her lord attends. 410

Soon as the morn, in orient purple dress'd,
Unbarr'd the portal of the roseate east,
'The monarch rose ; magnificent to view,
'Th' imperial mantle o'er his vest he threw ;
'The glitt'ring zone athwart his shoulders cast, 415
A starry falchion low-depending grac'd ;
Clasp'd on his feet the imbroider'd sandals shine :
And forth he moves, majestic and divine.
Instant to young Telemachus he press'd,
And thus benevolent his speech address'd. 420

Say, royal youth, sincere of soul, report
What cause hath led you to the Spartan court !
Do public or domestic cares constrain
'This toilsome voyage o'er the surgy main ? 425

O highly-favour'd delegate of Jove !
(Replies the prince ;) inflam'd with filial love,
And anxious hope, to hear my parent's doom,
A suppliant to your royal court I come.
Our sov'reign seat a lewd usurping race
With lawless riot and misrule disgrace : 430
To pamper'd insolence devoted fall
Prime of the flock and choicest of the stall :
For wild ambition wings their bold desire,
And all to mount th' imperial bed aspire.
But prostrate I implore, oh king ! relate 435
'The mournful series of my father's fate :
Each known disaster of the man disclose,
Born by his mother to a world of woes !

Recite them ! nor in erring pity fear
 To wound with storied grief the filial ear : 440
 If e'er Ulysses, to reclaim your right,
 Avow'd his zeal in council or in fight,
 If Phrygian camps the friendly toils attest,
 To the sire's merit give the son's request.
 Deep from his inmost soul Atrides sigh'd, 445
 And thus indignant to the prince reply'd :
 Heav'n's ! would a soft, inglorious, dastard train
 An absent hero's nuptial joys profane !
 So with her young, amid the woodland shades,
 A tim'rous hind the lion's court invades, 450
 Leaves in the fatal lair the tender fawns,
 Climbs the green cliff, or feeds the flow'ry lawns :
 Meantime return'd, with dire remorseless sway
 The monarch savage rends the trembling prey.
 With equal fury, and with equal fame, 455
 Ulysses soon shall re-assert his claim.
 O Jove supreme, whom gods and men revere !
 And thou*, to whom 'tis giv'n to gild the sphere !
 With pow'r congenial join'd, propitious aid !
 The chief adopted by the martial maid ! 460
 Such to our wish the warrior soon restore.
 As when contending on the Lesbian shore
 His prowess Philomelides confess'd,
 And loud-acclaiming Greeks the victor bless'd :
 Then soon th' invaders of his bed and throne, 465
 Their love presumptuous shall with life atone.
 With patient ear, oh royal youth, attend
 The storied labours of thy father's friend !
 Fruitful of deeds, the copious tale is long,
 But truth severe shall dictate to my tongue ; 470
 Learn what I heard the sea-born seer relate,
 Whose eye can pierce the dark recess of fate.
 Long on th' Ægyptian coast by calms confin'd,
 Heav'n to my fleet refus'd a prosp'rous wind :
 No vows had we preferr'd, no victims slain ! 475
 For this the gods each fav'ring gale restrain ;
 Jealous, to see their high behests obey'd,
 Severe, if men th' eternal nights evade.
 High o'er a gulfy sea, the Pharian isle
 Fronts the deep roar of disemboguing Nile : 480

* Apollo.

Ier distance from the shore, the course begun
 At dawn, and ending with the setting sun,
 A galley measures; when the stiffer gales
 Rise on the poop, and fully stretch the sails.
 There, anchor'd vessels safe in harbour ly, 485
 Whilst limpid springs the failing cask supply.

And, now the twentieth sun, descending, laves
 His glowing axle in the western waves;
 Still with expanded sails we court in vain
 Propitious winds to waft us o'er the main: 490
 And the pale mariner at once deplores
 His drooping vigour, and exhausted stores,
 When lo! bright cœrulean form appears,
 The fair Eidothea! to dispel my fears:
 Proteus her sire divine. With pity press'd, 495
 Me sole the daughter of the deep address'd;
 What time with hunger pin'd, my absent mates
 Roam the wild isle in search of rural cates,
 Bait the barb'd steel, and from the fishy flood
 Appease th' afflictive fierce desire of food. 500

Whoe'er thou art (the azure goddess cries)
 Thy conduct ill deserves the praise of wise;
 Is death thy choice, or misery thy boast,
 That here inglorious in a barren coast
 Thy brave associates droop, a meagre train, 505
 With famine pale, and ask thy care in vain?

Struck with the kind reproach, I straight reply,
 Whate'er thy title in thy native sky,
 A goddess sure! for more than mortal grace
 Speaks the descendant of ethereal race: 510
 Deem not, that here of choice my fleet remains;
 Some heav'nly pow'r averse my stay constrains:
 O, piteous of my fate, vouchsafe to shew,
 (For what's sequester'd from celestial view?)
 What pow'r becalms th' innavigable seas? 515
 What guilt provokes him, and what vows appease?

I ceas'd, when affable the goddess cry'd;
 Observe, and in the truths I speak confide:
 Th' orac'ious seer frequents the Pharian coast,
 From whose high bed my birth divine I boast: 520
 Proteus, a name tremendous o'er the main,
 The delegate of Neptune's wat'ry reign.

Watch with insidious care his known abode,
 There fast in chains constrain the various god ;
 Who bound, obedient to superior force, 525
 Unerring will prescribe your destin'd course.
 If studious of your realms, you then demand
 Their state, since last you left your natal land ;
 Instant the god obsequious will disclose
 Bright tracks of glory, or a cloud of woes. 530
 She ceas'd, and suppliant thus I made reply ;
 O goddess ! on thy aid my hopes rely :
 Dictate propitious to my duteous ear,
 What arts can captivate the changeful seer ?
 For perilous th' essay, unheard the toil, 535
 Th' elude the prescience of a god by guile.*
 Thus to the goddess mild my suit I end.
 Then she. Obedient to my rule, attend :
 When thro' the zone of heav'n the mounted sun
 Hath journey'd half, and half remains to run ; 540
 The seer, while zephyrs curl the swelling deep,
 Basks on the breezy shore, in grateful sleep,
 His oozy limbs. Emerging from the wave,
 The Phocæ swift surround his rocky cave,
 Frequent and full; the consecrated train 545
 Of her*, whose azure trident awes the main :
 There wallowing warm, th' enormous herd exhales
 An oily stream, and taints the noontide gales.
 To that recess, commodious for surprise,
 When purple light shall next suffuse the skies, 550
 With me repair ; and from thy warrior band
 Three chosen chiefs of dauntless soul command :
 Let their auxiliar force befriend the toil,
 For strong the god, and perfected in guile.
 Stretch'd on the shelly shore, he first surveys 555
 The flouncing herd ascending from the seas ;
 Their number summ'd, repos'd in sleep profound
 The scaly charge their guardian god surround :
 So with his batt'ring flocks the careful swain
 Abides, pavilion'd on the grassy plain. 560
 With pow'rs united, obstinately bold
 Invade him, couch'd amid the scaly fold :
 Instant he wears, elusive of the rape,
 The mimic force of ev'ry savage shape :

* Amphitrite.

Or glides with liquid lapse a murmur'ing stream, 565
 Or wrapt in flame, he glows at ev'ry limb.
 Yet still retentive, with redoubled might
 Thro' each vain passive form constrain his flight.
 But when, his native shape resum'd, he stands
 Patient of conquest, and your cause demands; 570
 The cause that urg'd the bold attempt declare,
 And sooth the vanquish'd with a victor's pray'r.
 The bands relax'd, implore the seer to say
 What godhead interdicts the wat'ry way?
 Who straight propitious, in prophetic strain 575
 Will teach you to repass th' unmeasur'd main.
 She ceas'd, and bounding from the shelfy shore,
 Round the descending nymph the waves rebounding
 High rapt in wonder of the future deed, (roar.
 With joy impetuous to the port I speed: 580
 The wants of nature with repast suffice,
 Till night with grateful shade involv'd the skies,
 And shed ambrosial dews. Fast by the deep,
 Along the tented shore, in balmy sleep
 Our cares were lost. When o'er the eastern lawn, 585
 In saffron robes, the daughter of the dawn
 Advanc'd her rosy steps, before the bay
 Due ritual honours to the gods I pay:
 Then seek the place the sea-born nymph assign'd,
 With three associates of undaunted mind. 590
 Arriv'd, to form along th' appointed strand
 For each a bed, she scoops the hilly sand:
 Then from her azure car the finny spoils
 Of four vast Phocæ takes, to veil her wiles;
 Beneath the finny spoils extended prone, 595
 Hard toil! the prophet's piercing eye to shun:
 New from the corse, the scaly frauds diffuse
 Unsav'ry stench of oil and brackish ooze:
 But the bright sea-maid's gentle pow'r implor'd,
 With nectar'd drops the sick'ning scene restor'd. 600
 Thus, till the sun had travell'd half the skies,
 Ambush'd we lay, and wait the bold emprise;
 When thronging thick, to bask in open air
 The flocks of ocean to the strand repair:
 Couch'd on the sunny sand, the monsters sleep: 605
 Then Proteus, mounting from the hoary deep,

Surveys his charge, unknowing of deceit :
 (In order told, we make the sum complete.)
 Pleas'd with the false review, secure he lies,
 And leaden slumbers press his drooping eyes. 610
 Rushing impetuous forth, we straight prepare
 A furious onset with the sound of war,
 And shouting seize the god : our force t' evade,
 His various arts he soon resumes in aid :
 A lion now, he curls a surgy mane ; 615
 Sudden, our bands a spotted pard restrain :
 Then, arm'd with tusks and lightning in his eyes,
 A boar's obscener shape the god belies :
 On spiry volumes, there, a dragon rides ;
 Here, from our strict embrace a stream he glides : 620
 And last, sublime his stately growth he rears,
 A tree, and well-dissembled foilage wears.
 Vain efforts ! with superior pow'r compress'd,
 Me with reluctance thus the seer address'd.
 Say, son of Atreus, say what god inspir'd 625
 This daring fraud ; and what the boon desir'd ?
 I thus : O thou, whose certain eye foresees
 The fix'd event of fate's remote decrees ;
 After long woes, and various toil endur'd,
 Still on this desert isle my fleet is moor'd ; 630
 Unfriended of the gales. All-knowing ! say,
 What godhead interdicts the war'ry way ?
 What vows repentant will the pow'r appease,
 To speed a prosp'rous voyage o'er the seas ?
 To Jove, (with stern regard the god replies,) 635
 And all th' offended synod of the skies,
 Just hecatombs, with due devotion slain,
 Thy guilt absolv'd, a prosp'rous voyage gain.
 To the firm sanction of thy fate attend,
 An exile thou, nor cheering face of friend, 640
 Nor sight of natal shore, nor regal dome
 Shalt yet enjoy, but still art doom'd to roam.
 Once more the Nile, who from the secret source
 Of Jove's high seat descends with sweepy force,
 Must view his billows white beneath thy oar, 645
 And altars blaze along his sanguine shore.
 Then will the gods, with holy pomp ador'd,
 To thy long vows a safe return accord.

He ceas'd : heart-wounded with afflictive pain,
(Doom'd to repeat the perils of the main, 650
A shelfy tract and long !) O seer, I cry,
To the stern sanction of th' offended sky
My prompt obedience bows. But deign to say,
What fate propitious or what dire dismay
Sustain those peers, the reliques of our host, 655
Whom I with Nestor on the Phrygian coast
Embracing left ? Must I the warriors weep,
Whelm'd in the bottom of the monstrous deep ?
Or did the kind domestic friend deplore
The breathless heroes on their native shore ? 660

Press not too far, reply'd the god ; but cease
To know, what known will violate thy peace :
Too curious of their doom ! with friendly woe
Thy breast will heave, and tears eternal flow.
Part live ! the rest, a lamentable train ! 665
Range the dark bounds of Pluto's dreary reign.
Two, foremost on the roll of Mars renown'd,
Whose arms with conquest in thy cause were crown'd,
Fell by disastrous fate ; by tempest tost,
A third lives wretched on a distant coast. 670

By Neptune rescu'd from Minerva's hate,
On Gyræ, safe Oilean Ajax sat,
His ship o'erwhelm'd ; but frowning on the floods,
Impious he roar'd defiance to the gods ;
'To his own prowess all the glory gave, 675
The pow'r defrauding who vouchsaf'd to save.
This heard the raging ruler of the main ;
His spear, indignant for such high disdain,
He launch'd ; dividing with his forky mace
Th' aerial summit from the marble base : 680
The rock rush'd seaward with impetuous roar,
Ingulf'd, and to th' abyss the boaster bore.

By Juno's guardian aid, the watry vast,
Secure of storms, your royal brother past :
Till coasting nigh the cape where Malea shrouds 685
Her spiry cliffs amid surrounding clouds,
A whirling gust, tumultuous, from the shore
Across the deep his lab'ring vessel bore.
In an ill-fated hour the coast he gain'd,
Where late in regal pomp Thyestes reign'd ; 690

But when his hoary honours bow'd to fate,
 Ægythus govern'd in paternal state.
 The surges now subside, the tempest ends;
 From his tall ship the king of men descends:
 There fondly thinks the god concludes his toil! 695
 Far from his own domain salutes the soil:
 With rapture oft the verge of Greece reviews,
 And the dear turf with tears of joy bedews.
 Him, thus exulting, on the distant strand
 A spy distinguish'd from his airy stand; 700
 To bribe whose vigilance Ægythus told
 A mighty sum of all-persuading gold:
 There watch'd this guardian of his guilty fear,
 Till the twelfth moon had wheel'd her pale career;
 And now, admonish by his eye to court, 705
 With terror wing'd, conveys the dread report.
 Of deathful arts expert, his lord employs
 The ministers of blood, in dark surprize;
 And twenty youths, in radiant mail incas'd,
 Close ambush'd nigh the spacious hall he plac'd. 710
 Then bids prepare the hospitable treat:
 Vain shews of love to veil his felon hate!
 To grace the victor's welcome from the wars,
 A train of coursers and triumphal cars
 Magnificent he leads: the royal guest, 715
 Thoughtless of ill, accepts the fraudulent feast,
 The troop, forth issuing from the dark recess,
 With homicidal rage the king oppress!
 So, whilst he feeds luxurious in the stall,
 The sov'reign of the herd is doom'd to fall. 720
 The partners of his fame and toils at Troy,
 Around their lord, a mighty ruin! lie:
 Mix'd with the brave, the base invaders bleed;
 Ægythus sole survives to boast the deed.
 He said: chill horrors shook my shiv'ring soul, 725
 Rack'd with convulsive pangs in dust I roll;
 And hate, in madness of extreme despair,
 To view the sun, or breathe the vital air.
 But when superior to the rage of woe
 I stood restor'd, and tears had ceas'd to flow; 730
 Lenient of grief, the pitying god began—
 Forget the brother, and resume the man;

To fate's supreme dispose the dead resign,
'That care be Fate's, a speedy passage thine.
Still lives the wretch who wrought the death deplor'd,
But lives a victim for thy vengeful sword ; 736
Unless with filial rage Orestes glow,
And swift prevent the meditated blow :
You timely will return a welcome guest,
With him to share the sad funereal feast. 740

He said : new thoughts my beating heart employ,
My gloomy soul receives a gleam of joy.
Fair hope revives ; and eager I address
The prescient godhead to reveal the rest.
'The doom decreed of these disastrous two 745
I've heard with pain, but oh ! the tale pursue :
What third brave son of Mars the fates constrain
To roam the howling desert of the main ?
Or in eternal shade if cold he lies,
Provoke new sorrow from these grateful eyes. 750

That chief, (rejoin the god) his race derives
From Ithaca, and wond'rous woes survives :
Laertes' son : girt with circumfluous tides,
He still calamitous constraint abides.
Him in Calypso's cave of late I view'd, 755
When streaming grief his faded cheek bedew'd.
But vain his pray'r, his arts are vain to move
Th' enamour'd goddess, or elude her love :
His vessel sunk, and dear companions lost,
He lives reluctant on a foreign coast. 760
But oh, belov'd by heav'n ! reserv'd to thee
A happier lot the smiling fates decree ;
Free from that law, beneath whose mortal sway
Matter is chang'd, and varying forms decay ;
Elysium shall be thine ; the blissful plains 765
Of utmost earth, where Rhadamanthus reigns.
Joys ever young, unmix'd with pain or fear,
Fill the wide circle of th' eternal year :
Stern winter smiles on that auspicious clime :
Thè fields are florid with unfading prime : 770
From the bleak pole no winds inclement blow,
Mould the round hail, or flake the fleecy snow ;
But from the breezy deep the blest inhale
The fragrant murmurs of the western gale.

This grace peculiar will the gods afford 775
To thee the son of Jove and beauteous Helen's lord.

He ceas'd and plunging in the vast profound,
Beneath the god the whirling billows bound.
Then speeding back, involv'd in various thought,
My friends attending at the shore I sought. 780

Arriv'd the rage of hunger we controul,
Till night with silent shade invests the pole ;
Then lose the cares of life in pleasing rest.—

Soon as the morn reveals the roseate east,
With sails we wing the masts, our anchors weigh, 785
Unmoor'd the fleet and rush into the sea.

Rang'd on the banks, beneath our equal oars
White curl the waves, and the vex'd ocean roars.
Then steering backward from the Pharian isle,
We gain the stream of Jove-descended Nile : 790

There quit the ships, and on the destin'd shore
With ritual hecatombs the gods adore :
Their wrath aton'd, to Agamemnon's name
A cenotaph I raise of deathless fame.

These rites to piety and grief discharg'd, 795
The friendly gods a springing gale enlarg'd :

The fleet swift tilting o'er the surges flew,
Till Grecian cliffs appear'd, a blissful view !
Thy patient ear hath heard me long relate
A story fruitful of disastrous fate : 800

And now, young prince, indulge my fond request ;
Be Sparta honour'd with his royal guest,
Till from his eastern goal, the joyous sun
His twelfth diurnal race begins to run.

Mean time my train the friendly gifts prepare, 805
Three sprightly coursers, and a polish'd car :

With these, a goblet of capacious mold,
Figur'd with art to dignify the gold,
(Form'd for libation to the gods,) shall prove
A pledge and monument of sacred love. 810

My quick return, young Ithacus rejoin'd,
Damps the warm wishes of my raptur'd mind :
Did not my fate my needful haste constrain,
Charm'd by your speech, so graceful and humane,
Lost in delight the circling year would roll, 815
While deep attention fix'd my list'ning soul.

But now to Pyle permit my destin'd way,
 My lov'd associates chide my long delay :
 In dear remembrance of your royal grace,
 I take the present of the promis'd vase ; 820
 The coursers for the champain sports retain ;
 That gift our barren rocks will render vain :
 Horrid with cliffs, our meagre land allows
 Thin herbage for the mountain goat to browse,
 But neither mead nor plain supplies, to feed 825
 The sprightly courser, or indulge his speed :
 To sea-surrounding realms the gods assign
 Small tracts of fertile lawn, the least to mine.

His hand the king with tender passion press'd,
 And smiling thus, the royal youth address : 830
 O early worth ! a soul so wise, and young,
 Proclaims you from the sage Ulysses sprung,
 Selected from my stores, of matchless price,
 An urn shall recompense your prudent choice :
 Not mean the massy mold of silver, grac'd 835
 By Vulcan's art, the verge with gold encas'd ;
 A pledge the scepter'd pow'r of Sidon gave,
 When to his realm I plow'd the orient wave.

Thus they alternate ; while with artful care
 The menial train the regal feast prepare : 840
 The firstlings of the flock are doom'd to die ;
 Rich fragrant wines the cheering bowl supply ;
 A female band the gift of Ceres bring ;
 And the gilt roofs with genial triumph ring.

Mean while, in Ithaca, the suitor-pow'rs 845
 In active games divide their jovial hours :
 In areas vary'd with mosaic art,
 Some whirl'd the disk, and some the jav'lin dart.
 Aside, sequester'd from the vast resort,
 Antinous sat spectator of the sport ; 850
 With great Eurymachus, of worth confest,
 And high descent, superior to the rest ;
 Whom young Noemon lowly thus address. }

My ship, equip'd within the neighb'ring port,
 The prince, departing for the Pylian court, 855
 Requested for his speed ; but courteous, say,
 When steers he home, or why this long delay ?

For Elis I should sail with utmost speed,
 T' import twelve mares which there luxurious feed,
 And twelve young mules a strong laborious race, 860
 New to the plough, unpractis'd in the trace.

Unknowing of the course to Pyle design'd,
 A sudden horror seiz'd on either mind:
 The prince in rural bow'r they fondly thought,
 Numb'ring his flocks and herds, not far remote. 865

Relate, Antinous cries, devoid of guile,
 When spread the prince his sail for distant Pyle?
 Did chosen chiefs across the gulfy main
 Attend his voyage, or domestic train?
 Spontaneous did you speed his secret course 870
 Or was the vessel seiz'd by fraud or force?

With willing duty, not reluctant mind,
 (Noemon cry'd,) the vessel was resign'd.
 Who in the balance with the great affairs
 Of courts presume to weigh their private cares? 875

With him, the peerage next in pow'r to you,
 And Mentor, captain of the lordly crew,
 Or some celestial in his rev'rend form,
 Safe from the secret rock, and adverse storm,
 Pilots the course: for when the glimm'ring ray 880
 Of yester dawn disclos'd the tender day,
 Mentor himself I saw, and much admir'd.—

Then ceas'd the youth, and from the court retir'd.
 Confounded and appall'd, th' unfinish'd game
 The suitor's quit, and all to council came: 885
 Antinous first th' assembled peers address,
 Rage sparkling in his eyes, and burning in his breast.

O shame to manhood! shall one daring boy
 The scheme of all our happiness destroy?
 Fly unperceiv'd, seducing half the flow'r 890
 Of nobles, and invite a foreign pow'r?

The pond'rous engine rais'd to crush us all,
 Recoiling, on his head is sure to fall.
 Instant prepare me, on the neighb'ring strand,
 With twenty chosen mates a vessel mann'd; 895

For ambush'd close beneath the Samian shore
 His ship returning shall my spies explore:
 He soon his rashness shall with life atone,
 Seek for his father's fate, but find his own.

With vast applause the sentence all approve ; 900
 Then rise, and to the feastful hall remove :
 Swift to the queen the herald Medon ran,
 Who heard the consult of the dire divan :
 Before her doom the royal matron stands,
 And thus the message of his haste demands. 905

What will the suitors ? must my servant train
 'Th' allotted labours of the day refrain,
 For them to form some exquisite repast ?
 Heav'n grant this festival may prove their last !
 Or if they still must live, from me remove 910
 'The double plague of luxury and love !
 Forbear, ye sons of insolence ! forbear
 In riot to consume a wretched heir.
 In the young soul illustrious thought to raise,
 Were ye not tutor'd with Ulysses' praise ? 915
 Have not your fathers oft my lord defin'd,
 Gentle of speech, beneficent of mind ?
 Some kings with arbitrary rage devour,
 Or in their tyrant minions vest the pow'r :
 Ulysses let no partial favours fall ; 920
 The people's parent he protected all :
 But absent now, perfidious and ingrate !
 His stores ye ravage, and usurp his state.

He thus : O were the woes you speak the worst !
 They form a deed more odious and accurst : 925
 More dreadful than your boding soul divines :
 But pitying Jove avert the dire designs !
 The darling object of your royal care
 Is mark'd to perish in a deathful snare ;
 Before he Anchors in his native port, 930
 From Pyle re-sailing and the Spartan court ;
 Horrid to speak ! in ambush is decreed
 The hope and heir of Ithaca to bleed !
 Sudden she sunk beneath the weighty woes,
 The vital streams a chilling horror froze : 935
 The big round tear stands trembling in her eye,
 And on her tongue imperfect accents die.
 At length, in tender language, interwove
 With sighs, she thus express'd her anxious love.
 Why rashly would my son his fate explore. 940
 Ride the wild waves, and quit the safer shore ?

Did he, with all the greatly wretched, crave
A blank oblivion, and untimely grave!

'Tis not, reply'd the sage, to Medon giv'n

To know if some inhabitant of heav'n, 945

In his young breast the daring thought inspir'd ;

Or if alone with filial duty fir'd,

The winds and waves he tempts in early bloom,

Studious to learn his absent father's doom.

The sage retir'd : unable to controul 950

The mighty griefs that swell'd her lab'ring soul,

Rolling convulsive on the floor, is seen

The piteous object of a prostrate queen.

Words to her dumb complaint a pause supplies,

And breath to waste in unavailing cries. 955

Around their sov'reign wept the menial fair,

To whom she thus address'd her deep despair.

Behold a wretch whom all the gods consign

To woe ! Did ever sorrows equal mine ?

Long to my joys my dearest lord is lost, 960

His country's buckler, and the Grecian boast :

Now from my fond embrace by tempests torn,

Our other column of the state is borne :

Nor took a kind adieu ; nor sought consent !

Unkind confed'rates in his dire intent ! 965

Ill suits it with your shews of duteous zeal,

From me the purpos'd voyage to conceal :

Tho' at the solemn midnight hour he rose,

Why did you fear to trouble my repose ?

He either had obey'd my fond desire, 970

Or seen his mother pierc'd with grief expire.

Bid Dolius quick attend, the faithful slave

Whom to my nuptial train Icarius gave,

To tend the fruit groves ; with incessant speed

He shall this violence of death decreed 975

To good Laertes tell. Experienc'd age

May timely intercept the ruffian rage,

Convene the tribes, the murd'rous plot reveal,

And to their pow'r to save his race appeal.

Then Euryclea thus. My dearest dread ! 980

Tho' to the sword I bow this hoary head,

Or if a dungeon be the pain decreed,

I own me conscious of th' unpleasing deed :

Auxiliar to his flight, my aid implor'd,
 With wine and viands I the vessel stor'd ; 985
 A solemn oath impos'd, the secret seal'd,
 Till the twelfth dawn the light of heav'n reveal'd.
 Dreading th' effect of a fond mother's fear,
 He dar'd not violate your royal ear.
 But bathe, and in imperial robes array'd, 990
 Pay due devotions to the martial maid*,
 And rest affianc'd in her guardian aid ;
 Send not to good Laertes, nor engage
 In toils of state the miseries of age :
 'Tis impious to surmise, the pow'rs divine 995
 To ruin doom the Jove-descended line :
 Long shall the race of just Arctesius reign,
 And isles remote enlarge his old domain.

The queen her speech with calm attention hears,
 Her eyes restrain the silver-streaming tears : 1000
 She bathes, and rob'd, the sacred dome ascends,
 Her pious speed a female train attends ;
 The salted cakes in cannisters are laid,
 And thus the queen invokes Minerva's aid.

Daughter divine of Jove, whose arm can wield 1005
 Th' avenging bolt, and shake the dreadful shield !
 If e'er Ulysses to thy fane preferr'd
 The best and choicest of his flock and herd ;
 Hear, goddess, hear, by those oblations won ;
 And for the pious sire preserve the son : 1010
 His wish'd return with happy pow'r befriend,
 And on the suitors let thy wrath descend.

She ceas'd : shrill ecstasies of joy declare
 The fav'ring goddess present to the pray'r :
 The suitors heard, and deem'd the mirthful voice 1015
 A signal of her hymeneal choice :
 While one most jovial thus accosts the board :
 ' Too late the queen selects a second lord ;
 ' In evil hour the nuptial rite intends,
 ' When o'er her son disastrous death impends.' 1020
 Thus he, unskill'd of what the fates provide !
 But with severe rebuke Antinous cry'd.

These empty vaunts will make the voyage vain ;
 Alarm not with discourse the menial train ;

* Minerva,

The great event with silent hope attend ; 1025
Our deeds alone our council must commend.

His speech thus ended short, he frowning rose,
And twenty chiefs renown'd for valour chose :
Down to the strand he speeds with haughty strides,
Where anchor'd in the bay the vessel rides, 1030
Replete with mail and military store,
In all her tackle trim to quit the shore.
The desp'rate crew ascend, unfurl the sails ;
(The sea-ward prow invites the tardy gales ;)
Then take repast, till Hesperus display'd 1035
His golden circlet in the western shade.

Mean time the queen, without refection due,
Heart-wounded, to the bed of state withdrew :
In her sad breast the prince's fortunes roll,
And hope and doubt alternate seize her soul. 1040
So when the woodman's toil her cave surrounds,
And with the hunter's cry the grove resounds ;
With grief and rage the mother lion stung,
Fearless herself, yet trembles for her young.
While pensive in the silent slumb'rous shade, 1045
Sleep's gentle pow'rs her drooping eyes invade ;
Minerva, life-like, on embody'd air
Impress'd the form of Iphthima the fair :
(Icarius' daughter she, whose blooming charms
Allur'd Eumelus to her virgin arms ; 1050
A scepter'd lord, who o'er the fruitful plain
Of Thessaly wide-stretch'd his ample reign.)
As Pallas will'd, along the sable skies
To calm the queen the phantom sister flies.
Swift on the regal doom descending right, 1055
The bolted valves are previous to her flight.
Close to her head the pleasing vision stands,
And thus performs Minerva's high commands.

O why, Penelope, this causeless fear,
To render sleep's soft blessing unsincere ? 1060
Alike devout to sorrow's dire extreme,
The day reflection and the midnight dream !
Thy son the gods propitious will restore,
And bid thee cease his absence to deplore.

To whom the queen, (whilst yet her pensive mind
Was in the silent gates of sleep confin'd :) 1066

O sister to my soul for ever dear,
Why this first visit to reprove my fear?
How in a realm so distant should you know
From what deep source my ceaseless sorrows flow?
To all my hope my royal lord is lost, 1071
His country's buckler, and the Grecian boast:
And, with consummate woe to weigh me down,
The heir of all his honours and his crown,
My darling son, is fled! an easy prey 1075
To the fierce storms, or men more fierce than they:
Who in a league of blood associates sworn,
Will intercept th' unwary youth's return.

Courage resume, the shadowy form reply'd,
In the protecting care of heav'n confide: 1080
On him attends the blue-ey'd martial maid;
What earthly can implore a surer aid?
Me now the guardian goddess deigns to send,
To bid the patient his return attend.

The queen replies: if in the blest abodes 1085
A goddess, thou hast commerce with the gods;
Say breathes my lord the blissful realm of light,
Or lies he wrapt in ever-during night?

Inquire not of his doom, the phantom cries,
I speak not all the council of the skies; 1090
Nor must indulge with vain discourse, or long,
The windy satisfaction of the tongue.

Swift thro' the valves the visionary fair
Repas'd, and viewless mix'd with common air.
The queen awakes, deliver'd of her woes: 1095
With florid joy her heart dilating glows:
The vision, manifest of future fate,
Makes her with hope her son's arrival wait.

Meantime the suitors plough the wat'ry plain,
Telemachus in thought already slain! 1100
When sight of less'ning Ithaca was lost,
Their sail directed for the Samian coast,
A small but verdant isle appear'd in view,
And Asteris th' advancing pilot knew:
An ample port the rocks projected form, 1105
To break the rolling waves and ruffling storm:
That safe recess they gain with happy speed,
And in close ambush wait the murd'rous deed.

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK V.

The Argument.

The departure of Ulysses from Calypso.

Pallas, in a council of the gods complains of the detention of Ulysses in the island of Calypso; whereupon Mercury is sent to command his removal. The seat of Calypso described. She consents with much difficulty, and Ulysses builds a vessel with his own hands, on which he embarks. Neptune overtakes him with a terrible tempest, in which he is shipwrecked, and in the last danger of death; till Leucothea a sea-goddess assists him, and, after innumerable perils, he gets ashore on Phæacia.

THE saffron morn, with early blushes spread,
Now rose refulgent from Tithoneus' bed;
With new-born day to gladden mortal sight,
And gild the courts of heav'n with sacred light.
Then met th' eternal synod of the sky,
Before the god who thunders from on high,
Supreme in might, sublime in majesty.
Pallas, to these, deplores th' unequal fates
Of wise Ulysses, and his toils relates;
Her hero's danger touch'd the pitying pow'r,
The nymphs seducements, and the magic bow'r.
Thus she began her plaint. Immortal Jove!
And you who fill the blissful seats above!
Let kings no more with gentle mercy sway,
Or bless a people willing to obey,
But crush the nations with an iron rod,
And ev'ry monarch be the scourge of God:

5 }

10

15

If from your thoughts Ulysses you remove,
Who rul'd his subjects with a father's love.
Sole in an isle, encircled by the main, 20
Abandon'd, banish'd from this native reign,
Unblest he sighs, detain'd by lawless charms,
And press'd unwilling in Calypso's arms.
Nor friends are there, nor vessels to convey,
Nor oars to cut th' immeasurable way. 25
And now fierce traitors, studious to destroy
His only son, their ambush'd fraud employ;
Who, pious, following his great father's fame,
To sacred Pylos and to Sparta came. 29

What words are these? (reply'd the pow'r who forms
The clouds of night, and darkens heav'n with storms :)
Is not already in thy soul decreed,
The chief's return shall make the guilty bleed?
What cannot wisdom do? Thou may'st restore
Thy son in safety to his native shore; 35
While the fell foes who late in ambush lay,
With fraud defeated measure back their way.

Then thus to Hermes the command was giv'n.
Hermes, thou chosen messenger of heav'n!
Go, to the nymph by these our orders borne: 40
'Tis Jove's decree Ulysses shall return:
'The patient man shall view his old abodes,
Nor help'd by mortal hand, nor guiding gods;
In twice ten days shall fertile Scheria find,
Alone, and floating to the wave and wind. 45
The bold Phæacians there, whose haughty line
Is mixt with gods, half human, half divine.
'The chief shall honour as some heav'nly guest,
And swift transport him to his place of rest.
His vessels loaded with a plenteous store 50
Of brass, of vestures, and resplendent ore;
(A richer prize than if his joyful isle
Receiv'd him charg'd with Ilion's noble spoil;)
His friends, his country, he shall see, tho' late,
Such is our sov'reign will, and such is fate. 55

He spoke. The god who mounts the winged winds
Fast to his feet his golden pinions binds,
That high thro' fields of air his flight sustain
O'er the wide earth, and o'er the boundless main.

He grasps the wand that causes sleep to fly, 60
 Or in soft slumber seals the wakeful eye :
 Then shoots from heav'n to high Pieria's steep,
 And stoops incumbent on the rolling deep.
 So wat'ry fowl, that seek their fishy food,
 With wings expanded o'er the foaming flood, 65
 Now sailing smooth the level surface sweep,
 Now dip their pinions in the briny deep.
 'Thus o'er the world of waters Hermes flew,
 Till now the distant island rose in view :
 Then swift ascending from the azure wave, 70
 He took the path that winded to the cave.
 Large was the groat, in which the nymph he found,
 (The fair-hair'd nymph with every beauty crown'd ;)
 She sat and sung ; the rocks resound her lays :
 The cave was brighten'd with a rising blaze : 75
 Cedar and frankincense, an od'rous pile,
 Fram'd on the hearth, and wide perfum'd the isle ;
 While she with work and song the time divides,
 And thro' the loom the golden shuttle guides.
 Without the grot, a various silvan scene 80
 Appear'd around, and groves of living green ;
 Poplars and alders ever quiv'ring play'd,
 And nodding cypress form'd a fragrant shade :
 On whose high branches, waving with the storm,
 The birds of broadest wing their mansion form, 85
 The cough, the sea-mew, the loquacious crow,
 And scream aloft, and skim the deeps below.
 Depending vines the shelving cavern screen,
 With purple clusters blushing thro' the green.
 Four limped fountains from the clefts distill, 90
 And ev'ry fountain pours a sev'ral rill,
 In mazy windings wand'ring down the hill :
 Where bloomy meads with vivid greens were crown'd,
 And glowing violets threw odours round.
 A scene, where, if a god should cast his sight, 95
 A god might gaze, and wander with delight !
 Joy touch'd the messenger of heav'n : he stay'd
 Entranc'd, and all the blissful haunt survey'd.
 Him, ent'ring in the cave, Calypso knew ;
 For pow'rs celestial to each others view. 100

Stand still confest, tho' distant far they ly
To inhabitants of earth, or sea, or sky.
But sad Ulysses, by himself apart,
Pour'd the big sorrows of his swelling heart;
All on the lonely shore he sat to weep, 105
And roll'd his eyes around the restless deep;
Tow'rd his lov'd coast he roll'd his eyes in vain,
Till dimm'd with rising grief, they stream'd again.
Now graceful seated on her shining throne,
To Hermines thus the nymph divine begun. 110
God of the golden wand! on what behest
Arriv'st thou here, an unexpected guest?
Lov'd as thou art, thy free injunctions lay;
'Tis mine with joy and duty to obey.
Till now a stranger in a happy hour 115
Approach, and taste the dainties of my bow'r.
Thus having spoke, the nymph the table spread,
(Ambrosial cates, with nectar rosy red,)
Hermes the hospitable rite partook,
Divine refection! then, recruited, spoke, 120
What mov'd this journey from my native sky?
A goddess asks, nor can a god deny.
Hear then the truth. By mighty Jove's command,
Unwilling, have I trod this pleasing land;
For who, self-mov'd, with weary wing would sweep
Such length of ocean and unmeasur'd deep? 126
A world of waters! far from all the ways
Where men frequent, or sacred altars blaze.
But to Jove's will submission we must pay;
What pow'r so great, to dare to disobey? 130
A man, he says, a man resides with thee,
Of all his kind most worn with misery;
The Greeks (whose arms for nine long years employ'd
Their force on Ilium, in the tenth destroy'd)
At length embarking in a luckless hour, 135
With conquest proud, incens'd Minerva's pow'r:
Hence on the guilty race her vengeance hurl'd,
With storms pursu'd them thro' the liquid world.
There all his vessels sunk beneath the wave!
There all his dear companions found their grave! 140
Sav'd from the jaws of death by heav'n's decree,
The tempest drove him to these shores and thee.

Him Jove now orders to his native lands
Straight to dismiss ; so destiny commands ;
Impatient fate his near return attends, 145
And calls him to his country, and his friends.

Ev'n to her inmost soul the goddess shook ;
Then thus her anguish and her passion broke.
Ungracious gods ! with spite and envy curst !
Still to your own ethereal race the worst ! 150

Ye envy mortal and immortal joy,
And love, the only sweet of life, destroy.
Did ever goddess by her charms engage
A favour'd mortal, and not feel your rage?
So when Aurora sought Orion's love, 155
Her joys disturb'd your blissful hours above,

Till in Ortygia, Dian's winged dart
Had pierc'd the hapless hunter to the heart.
So when the covert of the thrice ear'd field
Saw stately Ceres to her passion yield, 160
Scarce could Iasion taste her heav'nly charms,
But Jove's swift lightening scorch'd him in her arms.

And is it now my turn, ye mighty pow'rs !
Am I the envy of your blissful bow'rs ?
A man, an outcast to the storm and wave, 165
It was my crime to pity, and to save :

When he who thunders rent his bark in twain,
And sunk his brave companions in the main.
Alone, abandon'd, in mid-ocean tost,
The sport of winds, and driven from ev'ry coast, 170
Hither this man of miseries I led,

Receiv'd the friendless, and the hungry fed ;
Nay promis'd (vainly promis'd !) to bestow
Immortal life, exempt from age and woe.
'Tis past—and Jove decrees he shall remove, 175
Gods as we are, we are but slaves to Jove.

Go then he may ; (he must, if he ordain,
Try all those dangers, all those deeps again ;)
But never, never shall Calypso send
To toils like these, her husband and her friend. 180

What ships have I, what sailors to convey,
What oars to cut the long laborious way ?
Yet, I'll direct the safest means to go ;
That last advice is all I can bestow.

To her, the pow'r who bears the charming rod, 185
Dismiss the man, nor irritate the god:
Prevent the rage of him who reigns above,
For what so dreadful as the wrath of Jove!
Thus having said he cut the cleaving sky,
And in a moment vanish'd from her eye. 190
The nymph obedient to divine command,
To seek Ulysses, pac'd along the sand.
Him pensive on the lonely beach she found,
With streaming eyes in briny torrents drown'd,
And inly pining for his native shore; 195
For now the soft enchantress pleas'd no more:
For now, reluctant and constrain'd by charms,
Absent he lay in her desiring arms,
In slumber wore the heavy night away,
On rocks and shores consum'd the tedious day; 200
There sat all desolate, and sigh'd alone,
With echoing sorrows made the mountains groan,
And roll'd his eyes o'er all the restless main,
Till dimm'd with rising grief they stream'd again.
Here, on his musing mood the goddess prest, 205
Approaching soft; and thus the chief address.
Unhappy man! to wasting woes a prey,
No more in sorrows languish life away:
Free as the winds I give thee now to rove——
Go fell the timber of yon lofty grove, 210
And form a raft, and build the rising ship,
Sublime to bear thee o'er the gloomy deep.
'To store the vessel let the care be mine,
With water from the rock, and rosy wine,
And life-sustaining bread, and fair array, 215
And prosp'rous gales to waft thee on thy way.
These, if the gods with my desires comply,
(The gods, alas! more mighty far than I,
And better skill'd in dark events to come),
In peace shall land thee at thy native home. 220
With sighs, Ulysses heard the words she spoke,
Then thus his melancholy silence broke.
Some other motive, goddess! sways thy mind,
(Some close design, or turn of womankind),
Nor my return the end, nor this the way, 225
On a slight raft to pass the swelling sea,

Huge, horrid, vast ! where scarce in safety fails
The best built ship, tho' Jove inspire the gales.
The bold proposal how shall I fulfil ;
Dark as I am, unconscious of thy will ? 230

Swear then, thou mean'st not what my soul forebodes ;
Swear by the solemn oath that binds the gods.

Him, while he spoke, with smiles Calypso ey'd
And gently grasp'd his hand, and thus reply'd :
This shews thee, friend, by old experience taught, 235
And learn'd in all the wiles of human thought.

How prone to doubt, how cautious are the wise ?
But hear, O earth, and hear ye sacred skies !
And thou, O styx ! whose formidable floods
Glide thro' the shades, and bind the attesting gods ! 240

No form'd design, no mediated end
Lurks in the counsel of thy faithful friend ;
Kind the persuasion, and sincere my aim :
The same my practice were my fate the same.
Heav'n has not curst me with a heart of steel, 245
But giv'n the sense to pity, and to feel.

Thus having said, the goddess march'd before ;
He trode her footsteps in the sandy shore.
At the cool cave arriv'd they took their state ;
He fill'd the throne where Mercury had sat ; 250

From him the nymph a rich repast ordains,
Such as the life of mortal man sustains ;
Before herself were plac'd the cates divine,
Ambrosial banquet, and celestial wine.

Their hunger satiate, and their thirst repress, 255
Thus spoke Calypso to her godlike guest.

Ulysses ! (with a sigh she thus began ;)
O sprung from gods ! in wisdom more than man :
Is then thy home the passion of thy heart ?
Thus wilt thou leave me, are we thus to part ; 260

Farewell ! and ever joyful may'st thou be,
Nor break the transport with one thought of me.
But ah, Ulysses ! wert thou giv'n to know
What fate yet dooms thee, yet, to undergo ;

Thy heart might settle in this scene of ease, 265
And ev'n these slighted charms might learn to please.
A willing goddess, and immortal life,
Might banish from thy mind an absent wife,

Am I inferior to a mortal dame ?
Less soft my feature, less august my frame ? 270
Or shall the daughters of mankind compare
Their earth-born beauties with the heav'nly fair ?

Alas ! for this (the prudent man replies)
Against Ulysses shall thy anger rise ?
Lov'd and ador'd, oh goddess, as thou art, 275
Forgive the weakness of a human heart.

Tho' well I see thy graces far above
The dear, tho' mortal, object of my love,
Of youth eternal well the difference know,
And the short date of fading charms below ; 280
Yet ev'ry day, while absent thus I roam,
I languish to return, and die at home.

Whate'er the gods shall destine me to bear
In the black ocean, or the watry war,
'Tis mine to master with a constant mind ; 285
Inur'd to perils, to the worst resign'd,
By seas, by wars, so many dangers run ;
Still I can suffer ; their high will be done !

Thus while he spoke the beamy sun descends,
And rising night her friendly shade extends. 290
To the close grot the lonely pair remove,
And slept delighted with the gifts of love.
When rosy morning call'd them from their rest,
Ulysses rob'd him in the cloak and vest.

The nymph's fair head a veil transparent grac'd, 295
Her swelling loins a radiant zone embrac'd,
With flow'rs of gold ; and under robe, unbound,
In snowy waves flow'd glitt'ring on the ground.

Forth issuing thus, she gave him first to wield
A weighty axe, with truest temper steel'd, 300
And double edg'd ; the handle smooth and plain,
Wrought of the clouded olive's easy grain ;

And next a wedge, to drive with sweepy sway :
Then to the neighb'ring forest led the way.
On the lone island's utmost verge there stood 305
Of poplars, pines, and firs, and lofty wood,

Whose leafless summits to the skies aspire,
Scorch'd by the sun, or sear'd by heav'nly fire :
(Already dry'd.) These pointing out to view,
The nymph just shew'd him, and with tears withdrew.

Now toils the hero; trees on trees o'erthrown 311
 Fall crackling round him, and the forest groan :
 Sudden, full twenty on the plain are strow'd,
 And lopp'd, and lighten'd of their branchy load.
 At equal angles these dispos'd to join, 315
 He smooth'd and squar'd 'em by the rule and line.
 (The wimbles for the work Calypso found;)
 With those he pierc'd them, and with clenchers bound.
 Long and capacious as a shipwright forms
 Some bark's broad bottom to out-ride the storms, 320
 So large he built the raft : then ribb'd it strong
 From space to space, and nail'd the planks along ;
 These form'd the sides ; the deck he fashion'd last ;
 Then o'er the vessel rais'd the taper mast,
 With crossing sail-yards dancing in the wind ; 325
 And to the helm the guiding rudder join'd.
 (With yielding osiers fenc'd, to break the force
 Of surging waves, and steer the steady course.)
 Thy loom, Calypso ! for the future sails
 Supply'd the cloth, capacious of the gales. 330
 With stays and cordage last he rigg'd the ship,
 And, roll'd on levers, launch'd her in the deep.
 Four days were past, and now, the work complete,
 Shone the fifth morn ; when from her sacred seat
 The nymph dismiss'd him ; (od'rous garments giv'n,
 And bath'd in fragrant oils that breath'd of heav'n :) 336
 Then fill'd two goat-skins with her hands divine,
 With water one, and one with sable wine ;
 Of ev'ry kind provisions heav'd aboard ;
 And the full decks with copious viands stor'd. 340
 The goddess, last, a gentle breeze supplies,
 To curl old Ocean, and to warm the skies.
 And now, rejoicing in the prosp'rous gales,
 With beating heart Ulysses spreads his sails ;
 Plac'd at the helm he sat, and mark'd the skies, 345
 Nor clos'd in sleep his ever-watchful eyes,
 There view'd the Pleiads, and the northern team,
 And great Orion's more refulgent beam ;
 To which, around the axle of the sky
 The bear revolving, points his golden eye ; 350
 Who shines exalted on th' ethereal plain,
 Nor bathes his blazing forehead in the main.

Far on the left those radiant fires to keep
 The nymph directed, as he sail'd the deep.
 Full sev'nteen nights he cut the foamy way ; 355
 The distant land appear'd the foll'wing day :
 Then swell'd to sight Phæacia's dusky coast,
 And woody mountains, half in vapours lost :
 That lay before him, indistinct and vast,
 Like a broad shield amid the wat'ry waste. 360

But him, thus voyaging the deeps below,
 From far, on Solyme's aerial brow,
 The king of ocean saw, and seeing burn'd ;
 (From Ethiopia's happy climes return'd ;) 365
 'The raging monarch shook his azure head,
 And thus in secret to his soul he said.

Heav'ns ! how uncertain are the pow'rs on high ?
 Is then revers'd the sentence of the sky,
 In one man's favour ; while a distant guest
 I shar'd secure the Æthiopian feast ? 370
 Behold how near Phæacia's land he draws !
 The land, affix'd by fate's eternal laws
 To end his toils. Is then our anger vain !
 No ; if this sceptre yet commands the main.

He spoke, and high the forky trident hurl'd, 375
 Rolls clouds on clouds, and stirs the watry world ;
 At once the face of earth and sea deforms,
 Swells all the winds, and rouses all the storms :
 Down rush'd the night : east, west, together roar ;
 And south, and north, roll mountains to the shore. 380
 Then shook the hero, to despair resign'd,
 And question'd thus his yet unconquer'd mind.

Wretch that I am ! what farther fates attend
 This life of toils, and what thy destin'd end ?
 Too well, alas ! the island-goddess knew, 385
 On the black sea what perils should ensue.
 New horrors now this destin'd head enclose ;
 Unfill'd is yet the measure of my woes.
 With what a cloud the brows of heav'n are crown'd !
 What raging winds ! what roaring waters round ! 390
 'Tis Jove himself the swelling tempest rears ;
 Death, present death, on ev'ry side appears.
 Happy ! thrice happy ! who in battle slain,
 Prest, in Atrides' cause, the Trojan plain !

- Oh! had I dy'd before that well-fought wall; 395
 Had some distinguish'd day renown'd my fall,
 (Such as was that, when show'rs of jav'ins fled
 From conq'ring Troy around Achilles dead,)
 All Greece had paid me solemn fun'rals then,
 And spread my glory with the sons of men. 400
 A shameful fate now hides my hapless head,
 Unwept, unnoted, and for ever dead!
- A mighty wave rush'd o'er him as he spoke,
 The raft it cover'd, and the mast it broke;
 Swept from the deck, and from the rudder torn, 405
 Far on the swelling surge the chief was borne:
 While, by the howling tempest rent in twain,
 Flew sail, and sail-yards rattling o'er the main.
 Long prest, he heav'd beneath the weighty wave,
 Clogg'd by the cumbrous vest Calypso gave: 410
 At length emerging, from his nostrils wide,
 And gushing mouth, effus'd the briny tide.
 Ev'n then not mindless of his last retreat,
 He seiz'd the raft, and leapt into his seat;
 Strong with the fear of death. The rolling flood 415
 Now here, now there, impell'd the floating wood.
 As when a heap of gather'd thorns is cast,
 Now to, now fro, before th' autumnal blast,
 Together clung, it rolls around the field;
 So roll'd the float, and so its texture held. 420
 And now the south, and now the north, bear sway,
 And now the east the foamy floods obey,
 And now the west wind whirls it o'er the sea. }
- The wand'ring chief, with toils on toils oppress'd,
 Leucothea saw, and pity touch'd her breast: 425
 (Herself a mortal once, of Cadmus' strain,
 But now an azure sister of the main.)
 Swift as a sea-mew springing from the flood,
 All radiant on the raft the goddess stood:
 Then thus address him. Thou, whom heav'n decrees
 To Neptune's wrath, stern tyrant of the seas, 431
 (Unequal contest!) not his rage and pow'r,
 Great as he is, such virtue shall devour.
 What I suggest thy wisdom will perform;
 Forsake thy float, and leave it to the storm; 435

Strip off thy garments ; Neptune's fury brave
With naked strength, and plunge into the wave.
To reach Phæacia all thy nerves extend,
There fate decrees thy miseries shall end,
This heav'nly scarf beneath thy bosom bind, 440
And live ; give all thy terrors to the wind.
Soon as thy arms the happy shore shall gain,
Return the gift, and cast it in the main ;
Observe my orders, and with heed obey,
Cast it far off, and turn thy eyes away. 445

With that her hand the sacred veil bestows,
Then down the deeps she div'd from whence she rose ;
A moment snatch'd the shining form away,
And all was cover'd with the curling sea.

Struck with amaze, yet still to doubt inclin'd, 450
He stands suspended, and explores his mind.
What shall I do ? Unhappy me ! who knows
But other gods intend me other woes ?
Whoe'er thou art, I shall not blindly join
Thy pleaded reason, but consult with mine : 455
For scarce in ken appears that distant isle
Thy voice fortels me shall conclude my toil.
Then thus I judge : while yet the planks sustain
The wild waves fury, here I fix'd remain ;
But when their texture to the tempest yields, 460
I launch advent'rous on the liquid fields,
Join to the help of gods the strength of man,
And take this method, since the best I can.

While thus his thoughts an anxious council hold,
The raging god a watry mountain roll'd ; 465
Like a black sheet the whelming billow spread,
Burst o'er the float, and thunder'd on his head.
Planks, beams, disparted fly : the scatter'd wood
Rolls diverse, and in fragments strows the flood,
So the rude Boreas o'er the fields new shorn, 470
Tosses and drives the scatter'd heaps of corn.
And now a single beam the chief bestrides ;
There pois'd a while above the bounding tides,
His limbs discumbers of the clinging vest,
And binds the sacred cincture round his breast : 475
Then prone on ocean in a moment flung,
Stretch'd wide his eager arms, and shot the seas along.

All naked now, on heaving billows laid,
Stern Neptune ey'd him, and contemptuous said :

Go, learn'd in woes, and other woes essay ! 480

Go, wander helpless on the watry way !

Thus, thus find out the destin'd shore, and then
(If Jove ordains it,) mix with happier men.

Whate'er thy fate, the ills our wrath could raise
Shall last remember'd in thy best of days. 485

This said, his sea-green steeds divide the foam,
And reach high *Ægæ* and the tow'ry dome.

Now, scarce withdrawn the fierce earth-shaking pow'r,
Jove's daughter *Pallas* watch'd the fav'ring hour,
Back to their caves she bade the winds to fly, 490
And hush'd the blust'ring brethren of the sky.

The drier blasts alone of *Boreas* sway,
And bear him soft on broken waves away ;
With gentle force impelling to that shore,
Where fate has destin'd he shall toil no more. 495

And now two nights, and now two days were past,
Since wide he wander'd on the watry waste ;
Heav'd on the surge with intermitting breath,
And hourly panting in the arms of death.

The third fair morn now blaz'd upon the main ; 500
Then glassy smooth lay all the liquid plain,
The winds were hush'd, the billows scarcely curl'd,
And a dead silence still'd the watry world.

When, lifted on a ridgy wave, he spies
The land at distance, and with sharpen'd eyes. 505
As pious children joy with vast delight,

When a lov'd sire revives before their sight,
(Who ling'ring long has call'd on death in vain,
Fixt by some dæmon to his bed of pain,
Till heav'n by miracle his life restore ;) 510

So joys *Ulysses* at th' appearing shore ;
And sees (and labours onward as he sees).

'The rising forests and the tufted trees.
And now, as near approaching as the sound
Of human voice the list'ning ear may wound, 515

Amidst the rocks he hears a hollow roar
Of murmuring surges breaking on the shore :
Nor peaceful port was there, nor winding bay,
'To shield the vessel from the rolling sea.

But cliffs, and shaggy shores, a dreadful sight ! 520
All rough with rock, with foamy billows white.
Fear seiz'd his slacken'd limbs and beating heart,
As thus he commun'd with his soul apart.

Ah me ! when o'er a length of waters tost,
These eyes at length behold th' unhop'd-for coast, 525
No port receives me from the angry main,
But the loud deeps demand me back again.
Above, sharp rocks forbid access ; around,
Roar the wild waves : beneath is sea profound !
No footing sure affords the faithless sand, 530
To stem too rapid, and too deep to stand.
If here I enter, my efforts are vain,
Dash'd on the cliffs, or heav'd into the main ;
Or round the island if my course I bend,
Where the ports open, or the shores descend, 535
Back to the seas the rolling surge may sweep,
And bury all my hopes beneath the deep.
Or some enormous whale the god may send ;
(For many such on Amphitrite attend) :
Too well the turns of mortal chance I know, 540
And hate relentless of my heav'nly foe.

While thus he thought, a monstrous wave up-bore
The chief, and dash'd him on the craggy shore :
Torn was his skin, nor had the ribs been whole,
But instant Pallas enter'd in his soul. 545
Close to the cliff, with both his hands he clung,
And stuck adherent, and suspended hung,
Till the huge surge roll'd off : then backward sweep
The reflux tides, and plunge him in the deep.
As when the Polypus, forth from his cave 550
Torn with full force, reluctant beats the wave ;
His ragged claws are stuck with stones and sands ;
So the rough rock had shagg'd Ulysses hands.
And now had perish'd, whelm'd beneath the main,
Th' unhappy man ; ev'n fate had been in vain : 555
But all-subduing Pallas lent her pow'r,
And prudence sav'd him in the needful hour.
Beyond the beating surge his course he bore.
(A wider circle, but in sight of shore),
With longing eyes, observing, to survey 560
Some smooth ascent, or safe-sequester'd bay,

Between the parting rocks at length he spy'd
 A falling stream with gentler waters glide;
 Where to the seas the shelving shore declin'd,
 And form'd a bay, impervious to the wind. 565
 To this calm port the glad Ulysses prest,
 And hail'd the river, and its god address.

Whoe'er thou art, before whose stream unknown
 I bend, a suppliant at thy watry throne,
 Hear azure king! nor let me fly in vain 570
 To thee from Neptune and the raging main.
 Heav'n hears and pities hapless men like me,
 For sacred ev'n to gods is misery:
 Let then thy waters give the weary rest,
 And save a suppliant, and a man distress. 575

He pray'd, and straight the gentle stream subsides,
 Detains the rushing current of his tides,
 Before the wand'rer smoothes the wat'ry way,
 And soft receives him from the rolling sea.
 That moment, fainting as he touch'd the shore, 580
 He dropt his sinewy arms: his knees no more
 Perform'd their office, or his weight upheld:
 His swol'n heart heav'd; his bloated body swell'd:
 From mouth and nose the brinny torrent ran;
 And lost in lassitude lay all the man, 585
 Depriv'd of voice, of motion, and of breath;
 The soul scarce waking in the arms of death.
 Soon as warm life its wonted office found,
 The mindful chief Leucothea's scarf unbound;
 Observant of her word, he turn'd aside 590
 His head, and cast it on the rolling tide.
 Behind him far, upon the purple waves
 The waters waft it, and the nymph receives.

Now parting from the stream, Ulysses found
 A mossy bank with pliant rushes crown'd; 595
 The bank he press'd, and gently kiss'd the ground:
 Where on the flow'ry herb as soft he lay,
 Thus to his soul the sage began to say.

What will ye next ordain, ye pow'rs on high?
 And yet, ah yet! what fates are we to try? 600
 Here, by the stream, if I the night out-wear,
 Thus spent already, how shall nature bear
 The dews descending, and nocturnal air?

Or chilly vapours! breathing from the flood
When morning rises!—If I take the wood, 605
And in thick shelter of innum'rous boughs
Enjoy the comfort gentle sleep allows;
Tho' fenc'd from cold, and tho' my toil be past,
What savage beast may wander in the waste?
Perhaps I yet may fall a bloody prey 610
To prowling bears, or lions in the way.
Thus long debating in himself he stood;
At length he took the passage to the wood,
Whose shady horrors on a rising brow
Wav'd high, and frown'd upon the stream below. 615
There grew two olives, closest of the grove,
With roots entwin'd, and branches interwove;
Alike their leaves, but not alike they smil'd
With sister-fruits: one fertile, one was wild.
Nor here the sun's meridian rays had pow'r, 620
Nor wind sharp piercing, nor the rushing show'r;
The verdant arch so close its texture kept;
Beneath this covert great Ulysses crept.
Of gather'd leaves an ample bed he made,
(Thick strown by tempest thro' the bow'ry shade), 625
Where three at least might winter's cold defy,
Tho' Boreas rag'd along th' inclement sky.
This store, with joy the patient hero found,
And sunk amidst 'em' heap'd the leaves around.
As some poor peasant fated to reside 630
Remote from neighbours in a forest wide,
Studious to save what human wants require,
In embers heap'd, preserves the seeds of fire:
Hid in dry foliage thus Ulysses lies,
'Till Pallas pour'd soft slumbers on his eyes; 635
And golden dreams (the gift of sweet repose)
Lull'd all his cares, and banish'd all his woes.

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK VI.

The Argument.

PALLAS appearing in a dream to Nausicaa, (the daughter of Alcinous king of Phæacia), commands her to descend to the river and wash the robes of state, in preparation to her nuptials. Nausicaa goes with her hand-maids to the river; where, while the garments are spread on the bank, they divert themselves in sports. Their voices awake Ulysses, who addressing himself to the princess, is by her relieved and clothed, and receives directions in what manner to apply to the king and queen of the island.

WHILE thus the weary wand'rer sunk to rest,
And peaceful slumbers calm'd his anxious breast;
The martial maid from heav'n's aerial height
Swift to Phæacia wing'd her rapid flight.
In elder times the soft Phæacian train 5
In ease possess the wide Hyperian plain;
Till the Cyclopean race in arms arose,
A lawless nation of gigantic foes:
Then great Nausithous from Hyperia far
Thro' seas retreating from the sound of war, 10
The recreant nation to fair Sheria led,
Where never science rear'd her laurel'd head:
There, round his tribes a strength of wall he rais'd;
To heav'n the glitt'ring domes and temples blaz'd:
Just to his realms, he parted grounds from grounds, 15
And shar'd the lands, and gave the lands their bounds.
Now in the silent grave the monarch lay,
And wise Alcinous held the regal sway.
To this high palace thro' the fields of air
The goddess shot; Ulysses was her care. 20
There as the night in silence roll'd away,
A heav'n of charms divine Nausicaa lay;

Thro' the thick gloom the shining portals blaze :
Two nymphs the portals guard, each nymph a grace.
Light as the viewless air, the warrior maid 25
Glides thro' the valves, and hovers round her head ;
A fav'rite virgins blooming form she took,
From Dymas sprung, and thus the vision spoke ;
Oh, indolent, to waste thy hours away !
And sleep'st thou careless of the bridal day ? 30
Thy spousal ornament neglected lies,
Arise, prepare the bridal train, arise !
A just applause the cares of dress impart,
And give soft transport to a parent's heart.
Haste, to the limpid stream direct thy way, 35
When the gay morn unveils her smiling ray :
Haste to the stream, companion of thy care,
Lo, I thy steps attend, thy labours share.
Virgin awake ! the marriage hour is nigh,
See ! from their thrones thy kindred monarchs sigh !
The royal car at early dawn obtain, 41
And order mules obedient to the reign :
For rough the way, and distant rolls the wave,
Where their fair vests Phæacian virgins lave.
In pomp ride forth, for pomp becomes the great, 45
And majesty derives a grace from state.
Then to the palaces of heav'n she sails,
Incumbent on the wings of wafting gales :
The seat of gods ; the regions mild of peace,
Full joy, and calm eternity of ease. 50
There no rude winds presume to shake the skies,
No rains descend, no snowy vapours rise ;
But on immortal thrones the blest repose ;
The firmament with living splendours glows.
Hither the goddess wing'd th' ærial way, 55
Thro' heav'n's eternal gates that blaz'd with day.
Now from her rosy car Aurora shed
The dawn, and all the orient flam'd with red.
Uprose the virgin with the morning light,
Obedient to the vision of the night. 60
The queen she sought : the queen her hours bestow'd
In curious works ; the whirling spindle glow'd
With crimson threads, while busy damsels cull
The snowy fleece, or twist the purpled wool.

- Meanwhile Phœacia's peers in council sat, 65
 From his high doom the king descends in state,
 Then with a filial awe the royal maid
 Approach'd him passing, and submissive said :
 Will my dread sire his ear regardful deign,
 And may his child the royal car obtain ! 70
 Say, with thy garments shall I bend my way,
 Where thro' the vales the massy waters stray ?
 A dignity of dress adorns the great,
 And kings draw lustre from the robe of state.
 Five sons thou hast ; three wait the bridal day, 75
 And spotless robes become the young and gay :
 So when with praise amid the dance they shine,
 By these my cares adorn'd, that praise is mine.
 Thus she : but blushes ill restrain'd betray 80
 Her thoughts intentive on the bridal day :
 The conscious sire the dawning blush survey'd,
 And smiling thus bespoke the blooming maid.
 My child, my darling joy, the car receive,
 That, and whate'er our daughter asks, we give. 85
 Swift at the royal nod th' attending train
 The car prepare, the mules incessant rein.
 The blooming virgin, with dispatchful cares,
 Tunics, and stoles, and robes imperial bears.
 The queen, assiduous, to her train assigns 90
 The sumptuous viands, and the flav'rous wines.
 The train prepare a cruise of curious mold,
 A cruise of fragrance, form'd of burnish'd gold :
 Odour divine ! whose soft refreshing streams
 Sleek the smooth skin, and scent the snowy limbs.
 Now mounting the gay seat, the silken reins 95
 Shine in her hand : along the sounding plains
 Swift fly the mules : nor rode the nymph alone ;
 Around, a bevy of bright damsels shone.
 They seek the cisterns where Phœacian dames
 Wash their fair garments in the limpid streams : 100
 Where gathering into deep from falling rills,
 The lucid wave a spacious bason fills.
 The mules unharness'd range beside the main,
 Or crop the verdant herbage of the plain.
 Then emulus the royal robes they lave, 105
 And plunge the vestures in the cleansing wave ;

(The vestures cleans'd o'erspread the shelly sand,
Their snowy lustre whitens all the strand :
Then with a short repast relieve their toil,
And o'er their limbs diffuse ambrosial oil ; 110
And while the robes imbibe the solar ray,
O'er the green mead the sporting virgins play ;
(Their shining veils unbound.) Along the skies
Tost, and retost, the ball incessant flies.
They sport, they feast ; Nausicaa lifts her voice, 115
And warbling sweet, makes earth and heav'n rejoice.

As when o'er Erymanth Diana roves,
Or wide Taygetus' resounding groves,
A sylvan train the huntress queen surrounds,
Her rattling quiver from her shoulder sounds : 120
Fierce in the sport, along the mountain brow
They bay the boar, or chase the bounding roe :
High o'er the lawn, with more majestic pace,
Above the nymphs she treads with stately grace ;
Distinguish'd excellence the goddess proves ; 125
Exults Latona as the virgin moves.

With equal grace Nausicaa trode the plain,
And shone transcendent o'er the beauteous train.
Mean time, (the care and fav'rite of the skies,)
Wrapt in embow'ring shade Ulysses lyes, 130
His woes forgot ! but Pallas now addrest
To break the bands of all-composing rest.
Forth from her snowy hand Nausicaa threw
The various ball ; the ball erroneous flew,
And swam the stream : loud shrieks the virgin train,
And the loud shriek redoubles from the main. 136
Wak'd by the shrilling sound, Ulysses rose,
And to the deaf woods wailing breath'd his woes.

Ah me ! on what inhospitable coast,
On what new region is Ulysses tost : 140
Possess'd by wild barbarians fierce in arms,
Or men, whose bosom tender pity warms ?
What sounds are these that gather from the shores :
The voice of nymphs that haunt the sylvan bow'rs,
The fair-hair'd Dryads of the shady wood ; 145
Or azure daughters of the silver flood ;
Or human voice ? But, issuing from the shades,
Why cease I straight to learn what sound invades ?

Then, wherethe grove with leaves umbrageous bends,
 With forceful strength a branch the hero rends; 150
 Around his loins the verdant cincture spreads
 A wreathy foliage and concealing shades.

As when a lion in the midnight hours,
 Beat by rude blasts, and wet with wintry show'rs,
 Descends terrific from the mountain's brow; 155

With living flames his rolling eye-balls glow:
 With conscious strength elate, he bends his way,
 Majestically fierce, to seize his prey;
 (The steer or stag); or, with keen hunger bold,
 Springs o'er the fence, and dissipates the fold. 160

No less a terror, from the neighb'ring groves
 (Rough from the tossing surge) Ulysses moves;
 Urg'd on by want, and recent from the storms,
 The brackish ooze his manly grace deforms.

Wide o'er the shore with many piercing cry 165
 To rocks, to caves, the frightened virgins fly;
 All but the nymph: the nymph stood fix'd alone,
 By Pallas arm'd with boldness not her own.

Mean time in dubious thought the king awaits,
 And self consid'ring, as he stands, debates; 170
 Distant his mournful story to declare,
 Or prostrate at her knee address the pray'r.
 But fearful to offend, by wisdom sway'd,
 At awful distance he accosts the maid.

If from the skies a goddess, or of earth 175
 (Imperial virgin!) boast thy glorious birth,
 To thee I bend! if in that bright disguise
 Thou visit'st earth, a daughter of the skies,
 Hail, Dian, hail! the huntress of the groves
 So shines majestic, and so stately moves. 180

So breathes an air divine! But if thy race
 Be mortal, and this earth thy native place,
 Blest is the father from whose loins you sprung,
 Blest is the mother at whose breast you hung,
 Blest are the brethren who thy blood divide, 185
 To such a miracle of charms ally'd;

Joyful they see applauding princes gaze,
 When stately in the dance you swimth' harmonious maze.
 But blest o'er all, the youth, with heav'nly charms,
 Who clasps the bright perfection in his arms! 190

Never, I never view'd till this blest hour
Such finish'd grace ! I gaze and I adore !
Thus seems the palm with stately honours crown'd
By Phœbus' altars ; thus o'erlooks the ground ;
The pride of Delos. (By the Delian coast 195
I voyag'd, leader of a warrior host,
But ah how chang'd ! from thence my sorrow flows ;
O fatal voyage, source of all my woes !)
Raptur'd I stood, and, at this hour, amaz'd,
With reverence at the lofty wonder gaz'd : 200
Raptur'd I stand ! for earth ne'er knew to bear
A plant so stately, or a nymph so fair.
Aw'd from access, I lift my suppliant hands ;
For misery, oh queen, before thee stands !
Twice ten tempestuous nights I roll'd, resign'd 205
To roaring billows, and the warring wind ;
Heav'n bade the deep to spare ! but heav'n my foe,
Spare only to inflict some mightier woe !
Inur'd to cares, to death in all its forms,
Outcast I rove, familiar with the storms ! 210
Once more I view the face of human kind,
Oh let soft pity touch thy gen'rous mind !
Unconscious of what air I breathe, I stand
Naked, defenceless on a foreign land.
Propitious to my wants, a vest supply 215
To guard the wretched from th' inclement sky :
So may the gods, who heav'n and earth controul,
Crown the chaste wishes of thy virtuous soul ;
On thy soft hours their choicest blessings shed,
Blest with a husband be thy bridal bed ; 220
Blest be thy husband with a blooming race,
And lasting union crown your blissful days.
The gods, when they supremely bliss, bestow
Firm union on their favourites below ;
Then envy grieves, with inly-pining hate, 225
The good exult, and heav'n is in our state.
To whom the nymph : O stranger cease thy care ;
Wise is thy soul, but man is born to bear :
Jove weighs affairs of earth in dubious scales,
And the good suffers, while the bad prevails : 230
Bear, with a soul resign'd, the will of Jove,
Who breathes, must mourn : thy woes are from above,

But since thou tread'st our hospitable shore,
'Tis mine to bid the wretched grieve no more,
To clothe the naked, and thy way to guide.— 235
Know, the Phæacian tribes this land divide;
From great Alcinous' royal loins I spring,
A happy nation, and an happy king.

Then to her maids—Why, why, ye coward train
These fears, this flight? Ye fear and fly in vain. 240
Dread ye a foe! dismiss that idle dread;
'Tis death with hostile step these shores to tread;
Safe in the love of heav'n, an ocean flows
Around our realm, a barrier from the foes;
'Tis ours this son of sorrow to relieve, 245
Cheer the sad heart, nor let affliction grieve.
By Jove the stranger and the poor are sent,
And what to those we give, to Jove is lent.
Then food supply, and bathe his fainting limbs
Where waving shades obscure the mazy streams. 250

Obedient to the call, the chief they guide
To the calm current of the secret tide:
Close by the stream a royal dress they lay,
A vest and robe, with rich embroid'ry gay:
Then unguents in a vase of gold supply, 255
That breath'd a fragrance thro' the balmy sky.

To them the king. No longer I detain
Your friendly care; retire, ye virgin train!
Retire, while from my weary limbs I lave
The foul pollution of the briny wave: 260
Ye gods! since this worn frame refection knew,
What scenes have I survey'd of dreadful view?
But, nymphs, recede! sage chastity denies
To raise the blush, or pain the modest eyes.

The nymphs withdrawn, at once into the tide 265
Active he bounds; the flashing waves divide:
O'er all his limbs his hands the wave diffuse,
And from his locks compress the weedy ooze:
The balmy oil, a fragrant show'r, he sheds,
Then, drest in pomp magnificently treads. 270
The warrior-goddess gives his frame to shine,
With majesty enlarg'd and air divine:
Back from his brows a length of hair unfurls,
His hyacinthine locks descend in wavy curls.

- As by some artist, to whom Vulcan gives 275
 His skill divine, a breathing statute lives !
 By Pallas taught, he frames the wond'rous mold,
 And o'er the silver pours the fusile gold.
 So Pallas his heroic frame improves
 With heav'nly bloom, and like a god he moves. 280
 A fragrance breathes around : majestic grace
 Attends his steps : th' astonish'd virgins gaze.
 Soft he reclines along the murm'ring seas,
 Inhaling freshness from the fawning breeze.
 The wond'ring nymph his glorious port survey'd,
 And to her damsels, with amazement said. 286
 Not without care divine the stranger treads
 This land of joy : his steps some godhead leads ;
 Would Jove destroy him, sure he had been driv'n
 Far from this realm, the fav'rite isle of heav'n. 290
 Late a sad spectacle of woe, he trode
 The desert sands, and now he looks a god.
 Oh heav'n ! in thy connubial hour decree
 This man my spouse, or such a spouse as he !
 But haste, the viands and the bowl provide— 295
 The maids the viands and the bowl supply'd :
 Eager he fed, for keen his hunger rag'd,
 And with the gen'rous vintage thirst assuag'd.
 Now on return her care Nausicaa bends :
 The robes resumes, the glitt'ring car ascends. 300
 Far blooming o'er the field ; and as she press'd
 The splendid seat, the list'ning chief address'd
 Stranger arise ! the sun rolls down the day,
 Lo, to the palace I direct thy way :
 Where in high state the nobles of the land 305
 Attend my royal sire, a radiant band.
 But hear, tho' wisdom in thy soul presides,
 Speaks from thy tongue, and ev'ry action guides ;
 Advance at distance, while I pass the plain
 Where o'er the furrows waves the golden grain : 310
 Alone I reascend—With airy mounds
 A strength of wall the guarded city bounds ;
 The jutting land two ample bays divides ;
 Full thro' the narrow mouths descend the tides ;
 The spacious basons arching rocks inclose. 315
 A sure defence from ev'ry storm that blows.

Close to the bay great Neptune's fane adjoins;
 And near, a forum flank'd with marble shines,
 Where the bold youth, the num'rous fleets to store,
 Shape the broad sail, or smooth the taper oar: 320
 For not the bow they bend, nor boast the skill
 To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill;
 But the tall mast above the vessel rear,
 Or teach the flutt'ring sail to float in air.
 They rush into the deep with eager joy, 325
 Climb the steep surge, and thro' the tempest fly;
 A proud, unpolish'd race—To me belongs
 The care to shun the blast of sland'rous tongues;
 Lest malice, prone the virtuous to defame.
 Thus with vile censure taint my spotless name. 330
 'What stranger this, whom thus Nausicaa leads?
 'Heav'n's! with what graceful majesty he treads?
 'Perhaps a native of some distant shore,
 'The future consort of her bridal hour;
 'Or rather, some descendant of the skies; 335
 'Won by her pray'r, th' ærial bridegroom flies.
 'Heav'n on that hour its choicest influence shed,
 'That gave a foreign spouse to crown her bed!
 'All, all the godlike worthies that adorn
 'This realm, she flies; Phæacia is her scorn.' 340
 And just the blame; for female innocence
 Not only flies the guilt, but shuns th' offence;
 Th' unguarded virgin as unchaste I blame;
 And the least freedom with the sex is shame,
 Till our consenting sires a spouse provide, 345
 And public nuptials justify the bride.
 But would'st thou soon review thy native plain?
 Attend, and speedy thou shalt pass the main;
 Nigh where a grove, with verdent poplars crown'd,
 To Pallas sacred, shades the holy ground, 350
 We bend our way; a bubbling fount distils
 A lucid lake, and thence descends in rills;
 Around the grove a mead with lively green
 Falls by degrees, and forms a beauteous scene;
 Here a rich juice the royal vineyard pours, 355
 And there the garden yields a waste of flow'rs.
 Hence lies the town, as far as to the ear
 Floats a strong shout along the waves of air.

There wait embower'd, while I ascend alone
To great Alcinous on his royal throne.

360

Arriv'd, advance, impatient of delay,
And to the lofty palace bend thy way :
The lofty palace overlooks the town,
From ev'ry dome by pomp superior known ;
A child may point the way. With earnest gait 365
Seek thou the queen along the rooms of state ;
Her royal hand a wond'rous work designs,
Around, a circle of bright damsels shines,
Part twist the threads, and part the wool dispose,
While with the purple orb the spindle glows 370
High on a throne, amid the Scherian pow'rs,
My royal father shares the genial hours :
But to the queen thy mournful tale disclose ;
With the prevailing eloquence of woes :
So shalt thou view with joy thy natal shore, 375
Tho' mountains rise between, and oceans roar.

She added not, but waving as she wheel'd,
The silver scourge, it glitter'd o'er the field ;
With skill the virgin guides th' embroider'd rein :
Slow rolls the car before th' attending train. 380
Now, whirling down the heav'ns, the golden day
Shot thro' the western clouds a dewy ray ;
The grove they reach, where from the secret shade
To Pallas thus the pensive hero pray'd.

Daughter of Jove ! whose arms in thunder wield 385
Th' avenging bolt, and shake the dreadful shield ;
Forsook by thee, in vain I sought thy aid
When booming billows clos'd above my head :
Attend, unconquer'd maid ! accord my vows,
Bid the great hear, and pitying heal my woes, 390

This heard Minerva, but forbore to fly
(By Neptune aw'd !) apparent from the sky :
Stern god ! who rag'd with vengeance unrestrain'd,
Till great Ulysses hail'd his native land.

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK VII.

The Argument.

The Court of Alcinous.

THE Princess Nausicaa returns to the city, and Ulysses soon after follows thither. He is met by Pallas in the form of a young virgin, who guides him to the palace, and directs him in what manner to address the queen Arete. She then involves him in a mist, which causes him to pass invisible. The palace and gardens of Alcinous described. Ulysses falling at the feet of the queen, the mist disperses, the Phæacians admire, and receive him with respect. The queen inquiring by what means he had the garments he then wore, he relates to her and Alcinous his departure from Calypso, and his arrival on their dominions.

The same day continues, and the book ends with the night.

THE patient, heav'nly man thus suppliant pray'd ;
While the slow mules draw on th' imperial maid :
Thro' the proud streets she moves, the public gaze ;
The turning wheel before the palace stays.
With ready love her brother's gath'ring round, 5
Receiv'd the vestures, and the mules unbound.
She seeks the bridal bow'r ; a matron there
The rising fire supplies with busy care,
Whose charms in youth her father's heart inflam'd,
Now worn with age, Eurymedusa nam'd : 10
The captive dame Phæacian rovers bore,
Snatch'd from Epirus, her sweet native shore,

(A grateful prize,) and in her bloom bestow'd
On good Alcinous, honour'd as a god :
Nurse of Nausicaa from her infant years, 15
And tender second to a mother's cares.

Now from the sacred thicket where he lay,
To town Ulysses took the winding way.
Propitious Pallas, to secure her care,
Around him spread a veil of thicken'd air ; 20
To shun th' encounter of the vulgar crowd,
Insulting still, inquisitive and loud.

When near the fam'd Phæacian walls he drew,
The beauteous city op'ning to his view,
His step a virgin met, and stood before : 25
A polish'd urn the seeming virgin bore.
And youthful smil'd ; but in the low disguise
Lay hid the goddess with the azure eyes.

Show me, fair daughter, (thus the chief demands,)
The house of him who rules these happy lands. 30
Thro' many woes and wand'rings lo ! I come
To good Alcinous' hospitable dome.

Far from my native coast, I rove along,
A wretched stranger, and of all unknown :
'The goddess answer'd. Father I obey, 35
And point the wand'ring traveller his way.

Well known to me the palace you inquire,
For fast beside it dwells my honour'd sire :
But silent march, nor greet the common train
With question needless, or inquiry vain. 40
A race of rugged mariners are these ;
Unpolish'd men, and boist'rous as their seas :
The native islanders alone their care,
And hateful he that breathes a foreign air.

These did the ruler of the deep ordain 45
To build proud navies, and command the main :
On canvass wings to cut the watry way ;
No bird so light, no thought so swift as they.

Thus having spoke, th' unknown celestial leads : 50
The footsteps of the deity he treads,
And secret moves along the crowded space,
Unseen of all the rude Phæacian race.
(So Pallas order'd, Pallas to their eyes
'The mist objected, and condens'd the skies,)

The chief with wonder sees th' extended streets, 55
 The spreading harbours, and the riding fleets;
 He next their princes lofty domes admires,
 In sep'rate islands crown'd with rising spires;
 And deep intrenchments, and high walls of stone,
 'That girt the city like a marble zone. 60
 At length the kingly palace gate he view'd:
 'There stopp'd the goddess and her speech renew'd.
 My task is done; the mansion you inquire
 Appears before you: enter, and admire.
 High thron'd, and feasting, there thou shalt behold 65
 'The scepter'd rulers. Fear not, but be bold:
 A decent boldness ever meets with friends,
 Succeeds, and ev'n a stranger recommends.
 First to the queen prefer a suppliant's claim,
 Alcinous' queen, Arete is her name, 70 }
 The same her parents, and her pow'r the same.
 For know, from ocean's god Nausithous sprung,
 And Peribæa, beautiful and young:
 (Eurymedon's last hope, who rul'd of old
 'The race of giants, impious proud and bold; 75
 Perish'd the nation in unrighteous war,
 Perish'd the prince, and left this only heir:)
 Who now, by Neptune's am'rous pow'r comprest,
 Produc'd a monarch that his people blest,
 Father and prince of the Phæacian name; 80
 From him Rhexenor and Alcinous came.
 The first by Phœbus' burning arrows fir'd,
 New from his nuptials, hapless youth: expir'd.
 No son surviv'd: Arete heir'd his state,
 And her, Alcinous chose his royal mate. 85
 With honours yet to womankind unknown,
 This queen he graces, and divides the throne:
 In equal tenderness her sons conspire,
 And all the children emulate their sire.
 When thro' the streets she gracious deigns to move, 80
 (The public wonder, and the public love,)
 The tongues of all with transport sound her praise,
 The eyes of all, as on a goddess, gaze.
 She feels the triumph of a gen'rous breast;
 To heal divisions, to relieve th' oppress: 95 }
 In virtue rich; in blessing others blest.

Go then secure, thy humble suit prefer,
And owe thy country and thy friends to her.

With that the goddess deign'd no longer stay,
But o'er the world of waters wing'd her way : 100

Forsaking Scheria's ever pleasing shore,
The winds to Marathon the virgin bore ;
Thence, where proud Athens rears her tow'ry head,
With op'ning streets and shining structures spread,
She past, delighted with the well known seats ; 105
And to Erectheus' sacred dome retreats.

Mean while Ulysses at the palace waits,
There stops, and anxious with his soul debates,
Fix'd in amaze before the royal gates. }

The front appear'd with radiant splendors gay, 110

Bright as the lamp of night, or orb of day,
The walls were massy brass : the cornice high
Blue metals crown'd, in colours of the sky :

Rich plates of gold the folding doors incase ;
The pillars silver, on a brazen base ; 115

Silver the lintels deep-projecting o'er,
And gold the ringlets that command the door.

Two rows of stately dogs on either hand,
In sculptur'd gold and labour'd silver stand.

These Vulcan form'd, with art divine, to wait- 120
Immortal guardians at Alcinous' gate ;

Alive each animated frame appears,
And still to live beyond the pow'r of years:

Fair thrones within from space to space were rais'd,
Where various carpets with embroidery blaz'd, 125

The work of Matrons : these the princes prest,
Day following day, a long continu'd feast.

Refulgent pedestals the walls surround,
Which boys of gold with flaming torches crown'd ;

The polish'd ore, reflecting ev'ry ray, 130
Blaz'd on the banquets with a double day.

Full fifty handmaids form the household train ;
Some turn the mill, or sift the golden grain ;

Some ply the loom : their busy fingers move
Like poplar leaves when Zephyr fans the grove. 135

Not more renown'd the men of Scheria's isle,
For sailing arts and all the naval toil,

Than works of female skill their women's pride,
 The flying shuttle thro' the threads to guide :
 Pallas to these her double gifts imparts, 140
 Inventive genius, and industrious arts.

Close to the gates a spacious garden lies,
 From storms defended and inclement skies.
 Four acres was th' allotted space of ground,
 Fenc'd with a green enclosure all around ; 145
 Tall thriving trees confess'd the fruitful mold :
 The redd'ning apple ripens here to gold :
 Here the blue fig with luscious juice o'erflows,
 With deeper red the full pomegranate glows,
 The branch here bends beneath the weighty pear,
 And verdant olives flourish round the year. 151

The balmy spirit of the western gale
 Eternal breathes on fruits untaught to fail :
 Each dropping pear a foll'wing year supplies,
 On apples apples, figs on figs arise : 155
 The same mild season gives the blooms to blow,
 The buds to harden, and the fruits to grow.

Here order'd vines in equal ranks appear,
 With all the united labours of the year ;
 Some to unload the fertile branches run, 160
 Some dry the black'ning clusters in the sun,
 Others to tread the liquid harvest join,
 The groaning presses foam with floods of wine.
 Here are the vines in early flow'r descry'd,
 Here grapes discolour'd on the sunny side, 165 }
 And there in autumn's richest purple dy'd.

Beds of all various herbs, for ever green,
 In beauteous order terminate the scene.
 Two plenteous fountains the whole prospect crown'd ; }
 This thro' the gardens leads its streams around, 170 }
 Visits each plant, and waters all the ground :
 While that in pipes beneath the palace flows,
 And thence its current on the town bestows ;
 To various use their various streams they bring,
 The people one, and one supplies the king. 175

Such were the glories which the gods ordain'd,
 To grace Alcinous, and his happy land.
 Ev'n from the chief, who men and nations knew,
 Th' unwonted scene surprise and rapture drew ;

In pleasing thought he ran the prospect o'er,
Then hasty enter'd at the lofty door. 180

Night now approaching, in the palace stand,
With goblets crown'd, the rulers of the land;
Prepar'd for rest, and offering to the god*
Who bears the virtue of the sleepy rod. 185

Unseen he glided thro' the joyous crowd:
With darkness circled, and an ambient cloud.
Direct to great Alcinous' throne he came,
And prostrate fell before the imperial dame.
Then from around him dropp'd the veil of night; 190
Sudden he shines, and manifest to fight.

The nobles gaze, with awful fear oppress;
Silent they gaze, and eye the godlike guest.

Daughter of great Rhexenor! (thus begun
Low at her knees the much enduring man,) 195

To thee, thy consort, and this royal train,
To all that share the blessings of your reign,
A suppliant bends: oh pity human woe!
'Tis what the happy to th' unhappy owe.

A wretched exile to his country send, 200
Long worn with griefs, and long without a friend.

So may the gods your better days increase,
And all your joys descend on all your race;
So reign for ever on your country's breast,
Your people blessing, by your people blest! 205

Then to the genial hearth he bow'd his face,
And humbled in the ashes took his place.
Silence ensu'd. The eldest first began,
Echenus sage, a venerable man!

Whose well-taught mind the present age surpast, 210
And join'd to that th' experience of the last.

Fit words attended on his weighty sense,
And mild persuasion flow'd in eloquence.

Oh sight (he cry'd) dishonest and unjust!
A guest, a stranger, seated in the dust! 215

To raise the lowly suppliant from the ground
Befits a monarch. Lo! the peers around
But wait thy word, the gentle guest to grace,
And seat him fair in some distinguish'd place.

Let first the herald due libation pay 220
To Jove, who guides the wand'rer on his way;

* Mercury.

Then set the genial banquet in his view,
 And give the stranger-guest a stranger's due.
 His sage advice the list'ning king obeys,
 He stretch'd his hand the prudent chief to raise, 225
 And from his seat Laodamas remov'd,
 (The monarch's offspring, and his best belov'd,)
 There next his side the godlike hero sat;
 With stars of silver shone the bed of state.
 The golden ew'r a beauteous handmaid brings, 230
 Replenish'd from the cool translucent springs,
 Whose polish'd vase with copious streams supplies
 A silver laver of capacious size.
 The table next in regal order spread,
 The glitt'ring canisters are heap'd with bread : 235
 Viands of various kinds invite the taste,
 Of choicest sort and savour, rich repast !
 Thus feasting high, Alcinous gave the sign,
 And bade the herald pour the rosy wine.
 Let all around the due libation pay 240
 To Jove, who guides the wand'rer on his way.
 He said. Pontonus heard the king's command ;
 The circling goblet moves from hand to hand :
 Each drinks the juice that glades the heart of man.
 Alcinous then, with aspect mild, began. 245
 Princes and peers, attend ! while we impart
 To you the thoughts of no inhuman heart.
 Now pleas'd and satiate from the social rite
 Repair we to the blessings of the night :
 But with the rising day, assembled here, 250
 Let all the elders of the land appear,
 Pious observe our hospitable laws,
 And heav'n propitious in the stranger's cause ;
 Then join'd in council, proper means explore
 Safe to transport him to the wish'd-for shore ; 255
 (How distant that imports us not to know,
 Nor weigh the labour, but relieve the woe ;)
 Mean time, nor harm nor anguish let him bear ;
 This interval, heav'n trusts him to our care ;
 But to his native land our charge resign'd, 260
 Heav'n's is his life to come, and all the woes behind.
 There must he suffer what the fates ordain :
 For fate has wove the thread of life with pain,
 And twins, ev'n from the birth, are misery and man ! }

But if descended from th' Olympian bow'r.
Gracious approach us some immortal pow'r ;
If in that form thou com'st a guest divine,
Some high event the conscious gods design.
As yet, unbid, they never grac'd our feast,
The solemn sacrifice call'd down the guest ; 270
'Then manifest of heav'n the vision stood,
And to our eyes familiar was the god.
Oft with some favour'd traveller they stray,
And shine before him all the desert way :
With social intercourse, and face to face, 275
The friends and guardians of our pious race.
So near approach we their celestial kind,
By justice, truth, and probity of mind ;
As our dire neighbours of Cyclopeon birth
Match, in fierce wrong, the giant-sons of earth. 280
Let no such thought (with modest grace rejoin'd
The prudent Greek) possess thy royal mind.
Alas ! a mortal, like thyself, am I ;
No glorious native of yon azure sky ;
In form, ah how unlike their heav'nly kind ; 285
How more inferior in the gifts of mind ?
Alas, a mortal ! most oppress'd of those
Whom fate has loaded with a weight of woes ;
By a sad train of miseries alone
Distinguish'd long, and second now to none ! 290
By heav'n's high will compell'd from shore to shore,
With heav'n's high will prepar'd to suffer more.
What histories of toil could I declare !
But still long-weary'd nature wants repair ;
Spent with fatigue, and shrunk with pining fast, 295
My craving bowels still require repast.
Howe'er the noble, suff'ring mind may grieve
Its load of anguish, and disdain to live ;
Necessity demands our daily bread ;
Hunger is insolent, and will be fed. 300
But finish, oh ye peers ! what ye propose,
And let the morrow's dawn conclude my woes.
Pleas'd will I suffer all the gods ordain ;
To see my soil, my son, my friends, again.
That view vouchsaf'd, let instant death surprise 305
With ever-during shade these happy eyes !

'Th' assembled peers with gen'ral praise approv'd
 His pleaded reason, and the suit he mov'd.
 Each drinks a full oblivion of his cares,
 And to the gifts of balmy sleep repairs. 310
 Ulysses in the regal walls alone
 Remain'd : beside him, on a splendid throne,
 Divine Arete and Alcinous shone. }
 The queen, on nearer view, the guest survey'd
 Rob'd in the garments her own hands had made : 315
 Not without wonder seen. Then thus began,
 Her words addressing to the godlike man.
 Cam'st thou not hither, wond'rous stranger ! say,
 From lands remote, and o'er a length of sea ?
 Tell then whence art thou ? whence that princely air ?
 And robes like these, so recent and so fair ? 321
 Hard is the task, oh princess, you impose ;
 (Thus sighing spoke the man of many woes ;)
 'The long, the mournful series to relate
 Of all my sorrows sent by heav'n and fate ! 325
 Yet what you ask, attend. An island lies
 Beyond these tracts, and under other skies,
 Ogygia nam'd in ocean's watry arms ;
 Where dwells Calypso, dreadful in her charms
 Remote from gods or men she holds her reign, 330
 Amid the terrors of the rolling main.
 Me only me, the hand of fortune bore,
 Unblest ! to tread that interdicted shore ;
 When Jove tremendous in the sable deeps
 Launch'd his red lightning at our scatter'd ships ; 335
 Then, all my fleet, and all my foll'wers lost,
 Sole on a plank, on boiling surges tost,
 Heav'n drove my wreck th' Ogygian isle to find,
 Full nine days floating to the waves and wind.
 Met by the goddess there with open arms, 340
 She brib'd my stay with more than human charms ;
 Nay promis'd, vainly promis'd, to bestow
 Immortal life, exempt from age and woe.
 But all her blandishments successful prove,
 'To banish from my breast my country's love. 345
 I stay reluctant sev'n continued years,
 And water her ambrosial couch with tears.
 The eighth, she voluntary moves to part,
 Or urg'd by Jove, or her own changeful heart,

A raft was form'd to cross the surging sea : 350 }
 Herself supply'd the stores and rich array ;
 And gave the gales to waft me on the way.
 In sev'nteen days appear'd your pleasing coast,
 And woody mountains half in vapours lost.
 Joy touch'd my soul ; my soul was joy'd in vain, 355
 For angry Neptune rous'd the raging main ;
 The wild winds whistle, and the billows roar ;
 The splitting raft the furious tempest tore ;
 And storms vindictive intercept the shore. }
 Soon as their rage subsides, the seas I brave 360
 With naked force, and shoot along the wave,
 To reach this isle ; but there my hopes were lost,
 The surge impell'd me on a craggy coast.
 I chose the safer sea, -and chanc'd to find
 A river's mouth impervious to the wind, 365
 And clear of rocks. I fainted by the flood ;
 Then took the shelter of the neighb'ring wood.
 'Twas night : and cover'd in the foliage deep,
 Jove plung'd my senses in the death of sleep.
 All night I slept, oblivious of my pain ; 370
 Aurora dawn'd, and Phœbus shin'd in vain,
 Nor till oblique he slop'd his ev'ning ray,
 Had Somnus dry'd the balmy dew's away.
 Then female voices from the shore I heard :
 A maid amidst them goddess-like appear'd : 375
 To her I su'd, she pity'd my distress ;
 Like thee in beauty, nor in virtue less.
 Who from such youth could hope consid'rate care ?
 In youth and beauty wisdom is but rare !
 She gave me life, reliev'd with just supplies 380
 My wants, and lent these robes that strike your eyes.
 This is the truth : and oh ye pow'rs on high !
 Forbid that want should sink me to a lie.
 To this the king. Our daughter but exprest
 Her cares imperfect to our god-like guest. 385
 Suppliant to her since first he chose to pray,
 Why not herself did she conduct the way,
 And with her handmaids to our court convey ? }
 Hero and king ! (Ulysses thus reply'd),
 Nor blame her faultless, nor suspect of pride ; 390

She bade me follow in th' attendant train ;
 But fear and rev'rence did my steps detain,
 Lest rash suspicion might alarm thy mind :
 Man's of a jealous and mistaking kind.

Far from my soul (he cry'd) the gods efface 395
 All wrath ill-grounded, and suspicion base !

Whate'er is honest, stranger, I approve,
 And would to Phœbus, Pallas, and to Jove,
 Such as thou art, thy thought and mine were one,
 Nor thou unwilling to be call'd my son ; 400
 In such alliance couldst thou wish to join,

A palace stor'd with treasures should be thine.
 But if reluctant, who shall force thy stay ?

Jove bids to set the stranger on his way,
 And ships shall wait thee on the morning ray. 405

Till then, let slumber close thy careful eyes ;
 The wakeful mariners shall watch the skies,

And seize the moment when the breezes rise :
 Then gently waft thee to the pleasing shore,

Where thy soul rests, and labour is no more. 410
 Far as Eubœa tho' thy country lay,

Our ships with ease transport thee in a day.

Thither of old earth's * giant-son to view,
 On wings of winds with Rhadamanth they flew :

This land, from whence their morning course begun,
 Saw them returning with the setting sun. 415

Your eyes shall witness and confirm my tale,
 Our youth how dext'rous, and how fleet our sail,

When justly tim'd with equal sweep they row,
 And ocean whitens in long tracks below. 420

Thus he. No word th' experienc'd man replies,
 But thus to heav'n, (and heav'nward lifts his eyes) :

O Jove : oh father ! what the king accords
 Do thou make perfect ! sacred be his words !

Wide o'er the world Alcinous' glory shine ! 425
 Let fame be his, and, ah ! my country mine !

Mean time Arete, for the hour of rest.

Ordains the fleecy couch, and cov'ring vest :

Bids her fair train the purple quilts prepare,
 And the thick carpets spread with busy care. 430

With torches blazing in their hands they past.
And finish'd all their queen's command with haste ;
Then gave the signal to the willing guest :
He rose with pleasure, and retir'd to rest.
There, soft-extended to th' murm'ring sound 435
Of the high porch, Ulysses sleeps profound!
Within releas'd from cares, Alcinous lies ;
And fast beside were clos'd Arete's eyes.

ODYSSEY.

BOOK VIII.

The Argument.

ALCINOUS calls a council, in which it is resolved to transport Ulysses into his country. After which splendid entertainments are made, where the celebrated musician and poet Demodocus plays and sings to the guests. They next proceed to the games, the race the wrestling, discus, &c. where Ulysses casts a prodigious length, to the admiration of all the spectators. They return again to the banquet, and Demodocus sings the loves of Mars and Venus. Ulysses, after a compliment to the poet, desires him to sing the introduction of the wooden horse into Troy; which subject provoking his tears, Alcinous inquires of his guest his name, parentage, and fortune.

NOW fair Aurora lifts her golden ray,
 And all the ruddy orient flames with day;
 Alcinous, and the chief, with dawning light,
 Rose instant from the slumbers of the night;
 Then to the council-seat they bend their way, 6
 And fill the shining thrones along the bay.

Mean while Minerva, in her guardian care,
 Shoots from the starry vaults thro' fields of air:
 In form a herald of the king, she flies
 From peer to peer, and thus incessant cries: 10

Nobles and chiefs who rule Phæacia's states,
 The king in council your attendance waits;
 A prince of form divine your aid implores,
 O'er unknown seas arriv'd from unknown shores.

She spoke, and sudden with tumultuous sounds 15
 Of thronging multitudes the shore rebounds;
 At once the seats they fill: and ev'ry eye
 Gaz'd as before some brother of the sky,
 Pallas, with grace divine his form improves,
 More high he treads, and more enlarg'd he moves 20

She sheds celestial bloom, regard to draw ;
And gives a dignity of mien, to awe ;
With strength, the future prize of fame to play,
And gather all the honours of the day.
'Then from his glitt'ring throne Alcinous rose : 25
Attend he cry'd, while we our will disclose.
Your present aid this god-like stranger craves,
Tost by rude tempest thro' a war of waves :
Perhaps some realms that view the rising day,
Or nations subject to the western ray. 30
Then grant, what here all sons of woe obtain ?
(For here affliction never pleads in vain) :
By chosen youths prepar'd, expert to try
The vast profound, and bid the vessel fly :
Launch the tall bark, and order ev'ry oar ; 35
Then in our court indulge the genial hour.
Instant, you sailors, to this task attend ;
Swift to the palace, all ye peers ascend :
Let none to strangers honours due disclaim:
Be there Demodocus, the bard of fame, 40
Taught by the gods to please, when high he sings
The vocal lay, responsive to the strings.
Thus spoke the prince : th' attending peers obey,
In state they move ; Alcinous leads the way :
Swift to Demodocus the herald flies, 45
At once the sailors to their charge arise :
They launch the vessel, and unfurl the sails,
And stretch the swelling canvass to the gales ?
Then to the palace move : a gath'ring throng,
Youth, and white age tumultuous pour along : 50
Now all accesses to the dome are fill'd ;
Eight boars the choicest of the herd are kill'd :
Two beeves, twelve fatlings from the flock they bring
To crown the feast ; so wills the bounteous king.
The herald now arrives, and guides along 55
The sacred master of celestial song :
Dear to the music : who gave his days to flow
With mighty blessings, mixt with nights of woe :
With clouds of darkness quench'd his visual ray,
But gave him skill to raise the lofty lay, 60
High on a radiant throne sublime in state,
Encircled by huge multitudes, he sat ;

With silver shone the throne ; his lyre, well strung
 To rapt'rous sounds, at hand Pontonous hung :
 Before his seat a polish'd table shines, 65
 And a full goblet foams with gen'rous wines :
 His food a herald bore : and now they fed ;
 And now the rage of craving hunger fled.
 Then, fir'd by all the muse, aloud he sings
 The mighty deeds of demigods and kings ; 70
 From that fierce wrath the noble song arose,
 That made Ulysses and Achilles foes :
 How o'er the feast they doom the fall of Troy ;
 The stern debate Atrides hears with joy :
 For heav'n foretold the contest, when he trode. 75
 The marble threshold of the Delphic god,
 Curious to learn the councils of the sky,
 E'er yet he loos'd the rage of war on Troy.
 Touch'd at the song, Ulysses straight resign'd
 To soft affliction all his manly mind : 80
 Before his eyes the purple vest he drew,
 Industrious to conceal the falling dew :
 But when the music paus'd, he ceas'd to shead
 The flowing tear and rais'd his drooping head :
 And lifting to the gods a goblet crown'd, 85
 He pour'd a pure libation to the ground.
 Transported with the song, the list'ning train
 Again with loud applause demand the strain :
 Again Ulysses veil'd his pensive head,
 Again unmann'd a shower of sorrow shed ; 90
 Conceal'd he wept ; the king observ'd alone
 The silent tear, had heard the secret groan :
 Then to the bard aloud : O cease to sing,
 Dumb be thy voice, and mute th' harmonious string ;
 Enough the feast has pleas'd, enough the pow'r 95
 Of heav'nly song has crown'd the genial hour !
 Incessant in the games your strength display,
 Contest, ye brave, the honours of the day !
 That pleas'd th' admiring stranger may proclaim
 In distant regions the Phæacian fame : 100
 None wield the gauntlet with so dear a sway,
 O' swifter in the race devour the way :
 None in the leap spring with so strong a bound,
 Or firmer, in the wrestling, press the ground.

Thus spoke the king, the attending peers obey ; 103
 In state they move, Alcinous leads the way ;
 His golden lyre Demodocus unstrung,
 High on a column in the palace hung ;
 And guided by a herald's guardian cares,
 Majestic to the lists of fame repairs. 110

Now swarms the populace, a countless throng,
 Youth and hoar age ; and man drives man along ;
 The games begin ; ambitious of the prize,
 Acroneus, Thoon, and Eretmeus rise ;
 The prize Ocyalus and Prymneus claim, 115
 Anchialus and Ponteus, chiefs of fame ;
 There Proreus, Nautes, Eratreus appear,
 And fan'd Amphialus, Polyneus' heir ;
 Euryalus, like Mars terrific, rose,
 When clad in wrath he whithers hosts of foes ; 120
 Naubolides with grace unequal'd shone,
 Or equal'd by Laodamus alone.

With these came forth Ambasineus the strong ;
 And three brave sons, from great Alcinous sprung. 125

Rang'd in a line the ready racers stand ;
 Start from the goal, and vanish o'er the strand :
 Swift as on wings of wind upborne, they fly,
 And drifts of rising dust involve the sky :
 Before the rest, what space the hinds allow
 Between the mule and ox, from plough to plough ; 130
 Clytoneus sprung : he wing'd the rapid way,
 And bore th' unrivall'd honours of the day.
 With fierce embrace the brawny wrestlers join ;
 The conquest, great Euryalus, is thine.
 Amphialus sprung forward with a bound, 135
 Superior in the leap, a length of ground.
 From Elatreus' strong arm the discus flies,
 And sings with unmatch'd force along the skiea.
 And Laodam whirls high, with dreadful sway,
 The gloves of death, victorious in the fray. 140

While thus the peerage in the games contends,
 In act to speak, Loadamas ascends :

O friends, he cries, the stranger seems well skill'd
 To try th' illustrious labours of the field :
 I deem him brave ; then grant the brave man's claim,
 Invite the hero to his share of fame. 146

What nervous arms he boasts! how firm his tread!
His limbs how turn'd! how broad his shoulders spread!
By age unbroke!—but all-consuming care
Destroys perhaps the strength that time would spare:
Dire is the ocean, dread in all its forms! 151
Man must decay, when man contends with storms.

Well hast thou spoke, (Euryalus replies,)
Thine is the guest, invite him thou to rise.
Swift as the word advancing from the crowd 155
He made obeisance, and thus spoke aloud.

Vouchsafes the rev'rend stranger to display
His manly worth, and share the glorious day?
Father, arise! for thee thy port proclaims
Expert to conquer in the solemn games. 160
To fame arise! for what more fame can yield
Than the swift race or conflict of the field?
Steal from corroding care one transient day,
To glory give the space thou hast to stay;
Short is the time, and lo! ev'n now the gales 165
Call thee aboard, and stretch the swelling sails.

To whom with sighs Ulysses gave reply:
Ah why th' ill suiting pastime must I try?
To gloomy care my thoughts alone are free;
Ill the gay sports with troubled hearts agree; 170
Sad from my natal hour my days have ran,
A much afflicted, much-enduring man!
Who suppliant to the king and peers, implores
A speedy voyage to his native shores.

Wide wanders, Laodam, thy erring tongue, 175
The sports of glory to the brave belong;
(Resorts Euryalus :) he boasts no claim
Among the great unlike the sons of fame.
A wand'ring merchant he frequents the main,
Some mean sea-farer in pursuit of gain; 180
Studious of freight, in naval trade well skill'd,
But dreads th' athletic labours of the field.

Incens'd Ulysses with a frown replies;
O forward to proclaim thy soul unwise!
With partial hands the gods their gifts dispense; 185
Some greatly think, some speak with manly sense;
Here heav'n an elegance of form denies,
But wisdom the defect of form supplies;

This man with energy of thought controuls,
And steals with modest violence our souls, 190
He speaks reserv'dly, but he speaks with force,
Nor can one word be chang'd but for a worse ;

In public more than mortal he appears,
And as he moves the gazing crowd reveres.
While others, beauteous as th' etherial kind, 195
The nobler portion want, a knowing mind.

In outward show heav'n gives thee to excel,
But heav'n denies the praise of thinking well,
Ill bear the brave a rude ungovern'd tongue, 199
And, youth, my gen'rous soul resents the wrong ;
Skill'd in heroic exercise, I claim

A post of honour with the sons of fame :
Such was my boast, while vigour crown'd my days,
Now care surrounds me, and my force decays ;
Inur'd a melancholy part to bear, 205

In scenes of death, by tempest and by war.
Yet, thus by woes impair'd, no more I wave
To prove the hero.—Slander stings the brave.

Then striding forward with a furious bound
He wrench'd a rocky fragment from the ground, 210
By far more pond'rous, and more huge by far,
Than what Phæacia's sons discharg'd in air.

Fierce from his arm th' enormous load he flings,
Sonorous thro' the shaded air it sings ;
Couch'd to the earth, tempestuous as it flies, 215
The crowd gaze upwards while it cleaves the skies.

Beyond all marks, with many a giddy round
Down rushing, it upturns a hill of ground.
That instant Pallas, bursting from a cloud,
Fix'd a distinguish'd mark and cry'd aloud. 220

Ev'n he who sightless wants his visual ray,
May by his touch alone award the day :
The signal throw transcends the utmost bound
Of ev'ry champion by a length of ground :
Securely bid the strongest of the train 225
Arise to throw ; the strongest throws in vain.

She spoke ; and momentary mounts the sky ;
The friendly voice Ulysses hears with joy ;
Then thus aloud, (elate with decent pride,)
Rise ye Phæacians, try your force, he cry'd ; 230

If with this throw the strongest caster vie,
Still, further still, I bid the discus fly.
Stand forth ye champions, who the gauntlet wield,
Or you, the swiftest racers of the field!
Stand forth, ye wrestlers, who these pastimes grace!
I wield the gauntlet, and I run the race. 236
In such heroic games I yield to none,
Or yield to brave Laodamas alone:
Shall I with brave Laodamas contend?
A friend is sacred, and I stile him friend. 240
Ungen'rous were the man, and base of heart,
Who takes the kind, and pays th' ungrateful part;
Chiefly the man, in foreign realms confin'd,
Base to his friend, to his own int'rest blind:
All, all your heroes, I this day defy; 245
Give me a man, that we our might may try.
Expert in ev'ry art, I boast the skill
To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill;
Should a whole host at once discharge the bow,
My well-aim'd shaft with death prevents the foe: 250
Alone superior in the field of Troy,
Great Philoctetes taught the shaft to fly.
From all the sons of earth unrival'd praise
I justly claim; but yield to better days,
To those fam'd days when great Alcides rose, 255
And Eurytus, who bade the gods be foes:
(Vain Eurytus, whose art became his crime,
Swept from the earth he perish'd in his prime,
Sudden th' irremeable way he trod,
Who boldly durst defy the bowyer god.) 260
In fighting fields as far the spear I throw,
As flies an arrow from the well-drawn bow.
Sole in the race the contest I decline,
Stiff are my weary joints, and I resign,
By storms and hunger worn: age well may fail, 265
When storms and hunger both at once assail.
Abash'd the numbers hear the godlike man,
Till great Alcinous mildly thus began.
Well hast thou spoke, and well thy gen'rous tongue
With decent pride refutes a public wrong: 270
Warm are thy words, but warm without offence;
Fear only fools, secure in men of sense;

Thy worth is known. Then hear our country's claim,
And bear to heroes our heroic fame ;
In distant realms our glorious deeds display, 275
Repeat them frequent in the genial day ;
When blest with ease, thy woes and wand'rings end,
Teach them thy consort, bid thy sons attend ;
How lov'd of Jove he crown'd our sires with praise,
How we their offspring dignify our race. 280

Let other realms the deathful gauntlet wield,
Or boast the glories of th' athletic field ;
We in the course unrivall'd speed display,
Or thro' cærulean billows plow the way,
To dress, to dance, to sing our sole delight, 285
The feast or bath by day, and love by night ;
Rise then ye skill'd in measures ; let him bear
Your fame to men that breathe a distant air :
And faithful say, to you the pow'rs belong
To race, to sail, to dance, to chant the song. 290

But, herald, to the palace swift repair,
And the soft lyre to grace our pastimes bear.

Swift at the word, obedient to the king,
The herald flies, the tuneful lyre to bring.
Up rose nine seniors chosen to survey 295
The future games, the judges of the day :
With instant care they mark a spacious round,
And level for the dance th' allotted ground ;
The herald bears the lyre : intent to play,
The bard advancing meditates the lay. 300

Skill'd in the dance, tall youths, a blooming band,
Graceful before the heav'nly minstrel stand ;
Light-bounding from the earth, at once they rise,
Their feet half-viewless quiver in the skies :
Ulysses gaz'd, astonish'd to survey 305

The glancing splendours as their sandals play.
Mean time the bard, alternate to the strings,
The loves of Mars and Cytherea sings ;
How the stern god, enamour'd with her charms,
Clasp'd the gay panting goddess in his arms 310
By bribes seduc'd : and how the sun, whose eye
Views the broad heav'ns, disclos'd the lawless joy,
Stung to the soul, indignant thro' the skies
To his black forge vindictive Vulcan flies ;

- Arriv'd, his sinew arms incessant place 315
 Th' eternal anvil on the massy base.
 A wond'rous net he labours to betray
 The wanton lovers, as entwin'd they lay,
 Indissolubly strong ! 'Then instant bears 320
 To his immortal dome the finish'd snares.
 Above, below, around, with art disspread,
 The sure inclosure folds the genial bed ;
 Whose texture ev'n the search of gods deceives,
 Thin as the filmy threads the spider weaves.
 Then, as withdrawing from the starry bow'rs, 325
 He feigns a journey to the Lemnian shores,
 His fav'rite isle ! Observant Mars descries
 His wish'd recess, and to the goddess flies ;
 He glows, he burns, the fair-hair'd queen of love
 Descends smooth gliding from the courts of Jove, 330
 Gay blooming in full charms : her hand he prest
 With eager joy, and with a sigh address.
 Come, my belov'd ! and taste the soft delights :
 Come, to repose the genial bed invites :
 Thy absent spouse, neglectful of thy charms, 335
 Prefers his barb'rous Sintians to thy arms !
 Then, nothing loath, th' enamour'd fair he led,
 And sunk transported on the conscious bed.
 Down rush'd the toils, inwrapping as they lay
 The careless lovers in their wanton play : 340
 In vain they strive, th' intangling snares deny
 (Inextricably firm) the power to fly :
 Warn'd by the god who sheds the golden day,
 Stern Vulcan homeward treads the starry way ;
 Arriv'd, he sees, he grieves, with rage he burns, 345
 Full horrible he roars, his voice all heav'n returns :
 O Jove, he cry'd, oh all ye pow'rs above,
 See the lewd dalliance of the queen of love !
 Me, aukward me, she scorns ; and yields her charms
 To that fair lecher, the strong god of arms. 350
 If I am lame, that stain my natal hour
 By fate impos'd ; such me my parent bore :
 Why was I born ? See how the wanton lies !
 O sight tormenting to an husband's eyes !
 But yet I trust, this once ev'n Mars would fly 355
 His fair-one's arms—he thinks her, once, too nigh.

But there remain, ye guilty, in my pow'r,
Till Jove refunds his shameless daughter's dow'r.
Too dear I priz'd a fair enchanting face :
Beauty unchaste is beauty in disgrace. 360

Mean while the gods the dome of, vulcan throng,
Apollo comes, and Neptune comes along,
With these gay Hermes trod the starry plain ;
But modesty with-held the goddess-train.
All heav'n beholds, imprison'd as they lie : 365
And unextinguish'd laughter shakes the sky.

Then mutual thus they spoke : Behold on wrong
Swift vengeance waits : and art subdues the strong !
Dwells there a god on all th' Olympian brow
More swift than Mars, and more than Vulcan slow ? 370
Yet Vulcan conquers, and the god of arms
Must pay the penalty for lawless charms.

Thus serious they : but he who gilds the skies,
The gay Apollo, thus to Hermes cries.
Would'st thou, enchain'd like Mars, oh Hermes, ly, 375
And bear the shame like Mars, to share the joy ?

O envy'd shame ! (the smiling youth rejoin'd,)
Add thrice the chains, and thrice more firmly bind ;
Gaze all ye gods, and ev'ry goddess gaze,
Yet eager would I bless the sweet disgrace. 380

Loud laugh the rest, ev'n Neptune laughs aloud,
Yet sues importunate to loose the god :
And free, he cries, oh Vulcan ! free from shame
Thy captives ; I insure the penal claim.

Will Neptune (Vulcan then) the faithless trust ? 385
He suffers who gives surety for th' unjust :
But say, if that lewd scandal of the sky,
To liberty restor'd, perfidious fly ;
Say, wilt thou bear the mulct ; He instant cries,
The mulct I bear, if Mars perfidious flies. 390

To whom appeas'd : No more I urge delay ;
When Neptune sues, my part is to obey.
Then to the snares his force the god applies ;
They burst ; and Mars to Ithrace indignant flies :
To the soft Cyprian stores the goddess moves, 395
To visit Paphos, and her blooming groves,
Where to the pow'r an hundred altars rise,
And breathing odours scent the balmy skies :

Conceal'd she bathes, in consecrated bow'rs
The graces unguents shed ambrosial show'rs, 400
Unguents that charm the gods ! she last assumes
Her wond'rous robes ; and full the goddess blooms.

Thus sung the bard : Ulysses hears with joy,
And loud applauses rend the vaulted sky.

'Then to the sports his sons the king commands ; 405
Each blooming youth before the monarch stands,
In dance unmatch'd : A wond'rous ball is brought,
(The work of Polybus, divinely wrought ;)
This youth with strength enormous bids it fly,
And bending backward whirls it to the sky ; 410
His brother springing with an active bound,
At distance intercepts it from the ground :
The ball dismiss'd, in dance they skim the strand,
Turn and return, and scarce imprint the sand.

Th' assembly gazes with astonish'd eyes, 415
And sends in shouts applauses to the skies.

'Then thus Ulysses : Happy king, whose name
The brightest shines in all the rolls of fame :
In subjects happy : with surprize I gaze : 419
Thy praise was just ; their skill transcends thy praise.

Pleas'd with his people's fame the monarch hears,
And thus benevolent accosts the peers.
Since wisdom's sacred guidance he pursues,
Give to the stranger-guest a stranger's dues :
Twelve princes in our realm dominion share, 425
O'er whom supreme, imperial pow'r I bear :
Bring gold a pledge of love, a talent bring,
A vest, a robe, and imitate your king :
Be swift to give ; that he this night may share
The social feast of joy, with joy sincere. 430

And thou Euryalus, redeem thy wrong :
A gen'rous heart repairs a slanderous tongue.

Th' assenting peers, obedient to the king,
In haste their heralds send the gifts to bring.
Then thus Euryalus : O prince whose sway 435
Rules this blest realm, repentant I obey :

Be his this sword, whose blade of brass displays
A ruddy gleam ; whose hilt, a silver blaze ;
Whose ivory sheath inwrought with curious pride,
Adds graceful terror to the wearer's side. 440

He said; and to his hand the sword consign'd;
And if, he cry'd, my words affect thy mind,
Far from thy mind those words, ye whirlwinds bear,
And scatter them, ye storms, in empty air!
Crown, oh ye heav'ns, with joy his peaceful hours, 445
And grant him to his spouse and native shores!

And blest be thou, my friend Ulysses cries,
Crowd him with ev'ry joy, ye fav'ring skies;
To thy calm hours continu'd peace afford,
And never, never may'st thou want this sword! 450

He said, and o'er his shoulder flung the blade.
Now o'er the earth ascends the ev'ning shade:
The precious gifts th' illustrious heralds bear.
And to the court th' embody'd peers repair.
Before the queen Alcinous' sons unfold 455
The vests, the robes, and heaps of shining gold;
Then to the radiant thrones they move in state:
Aloft, the king in pomp imperial sat.

Thence to the queen. O partner of our reign,
O sole belov'd! command thy menial train 460
A polish'd chest and stately robes to bear,
And healing waters for the bath prepare;
That bath'd, our guest may bid his sorrows cease,
Hear the sweet song, and taste the feast in peace,
A bowl that flames with gold, of wond'rous frame. 465
Ourself we gave, memorial of our name:
To raise in off'rings to almighty Jove,
And ev'ry god that treads the courts above.

Instant the queen, observant of the king,
Commands her train a spacious vase to bring, 470
The spacious vase with ample streams suffice,
Heap high the wood, and bid the flames arise.
The flames climb round it with a fierce embrace,
The fuming waters bubble o'er the blaze.
Herself the chest prepares: in order roll'd 475
The robes, the vests are rang'd, and heaps of gold:
And adding a rich dress inwrought with art,
A gift expressive of her bounteous heart,
Thus spoke to Ithacus: to guard with bands
Insoluble these gifts, thy care demands: 480
Lest, in thy slumbers on the watry main,
The hand of rapine make our bounty vain.

Then bending with full force, around he roll'd
 A labyrinth of bands in fold on fold,
 Clos'd with Circean art. A train attends 485
 Around the bath: the bath the king ascends:
 (Untasted joy, since that disastrous hour,
 He sail'd ill-fated from Calypso's bow'r:)
 Where happy as the gods that range the sky,
 He feasted ev'ry sense, with ev'ry joy. 490
 He bathes: the damsels with officious toil,
 Shed sweets, shed unguents, in a show'r of oil:
 Then o'er his limbs a gorgeous robe he spreads,
 And to the feast magnificently treads.
 Full where the dome its shining valves expands 495
 Nausicaa blooming as a goddess stands,
 With wond'ring eyes the hero she survey'd,
 And graceful thus began the royal maid.
 Hail, god-like stranger! and when heav'n restores
 To thy fond wish thy long-expected shores, 500
 This ever grateful in remembrance bear,
 To me thou ow'st, to me the vital air.
 O royal maid, Ulysses straight returns,
 Whose worth the splendours of thy race adorns,
 So may dread Jove (whose arms in vengeance forms 505
 The written bolt, and blackens heav'n with storms)
 Restore me safe, thro' weary wand'rings tost,
 To my dear country's ever-pleasing coast,
 As while the spirit in this bosom glows
 'To thee, my goddess, I address my vows; 510
 My life, thy gift I boast! He said, and sat,
 Fast by Alcinous on a throne of state.
 Now each partakes the feast, the wine prepares,
 Portions the food, and each his portion shares.
 The bard an herald guides: the gazing throng 515
 Pay low obeisance as he moves along:
 Beneath a sculptur'd arch he sits enthron'd,
 The peers encircling from an awful round,
 Then from the chine Ulysses carves with art
 Delicious food, an honorary part: 520
 This, let the master of the lyre receive,
 A pledge of love! 'tis all a wretch can give.
 Lives there a man beneath the spacious skies,
 Who sacred honours to the bard denies?

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The muse the bard inspires, exalts his mind ; 525
The muse indulgent loves th' harmonious kind.

The herald to his hand the charge conveys,
Not fond of flatt'ry, nor unpleas'd with praise.

When now the rage of hunger was allay'd. 530
Thus to the lyrist wise Ulysses said ;

O more than man ; thy soul the muse inspires,
Or Phœbus animates with all his fires :

For who, by Phœbus uninform'd could know
The woe of Greece, and sung so well the woe : 535
Just to the tale, as present at the fray,

Or taught the labours of the dreadful day !

The song recalls past horrors to my eyes,

And bids proud Ilion from her ashes rise.

Once more harmonious strike the sounding string,
Th' Epæan fabric, fram'd by Pallas, sing ; 540

How stern Ulysses, furious to destroy,

With latent heroes sack'd imperial Troy.

If faithful thou record the tale of fame,

The god himself inspires thy breast with flame :
And mine shall be the task, henceforth to raise 545
In ev'ry land thy monument of praise.

Full of the god he rais'd his lofty strain,
How the Greeks rush'd tumultuous to the main :

How blazing tents illumin'd half the skies,
While from the shores the winged navy flies ; 550

How ev'n in Ilion's walls, in deathful bands,

Came the stern Greeks by 'Troy's assisting hands :

All 'Troy upheav'd the steed ; of diff'ring mind,
Various t'ue 'Trojans counsell'd part consign'd 555

The monster to the sword, part sentence gave

To plunge it headlong in the whelming wave :

Th' unwise award to lodge it in the tow'rs,

An off'ring sacred to th' immortal pow'rs ;

Th' unwise prevail, they lodge it in the walls,
And by the gods decree proud Ilion falls ; 560

Destruction enters in the treach'rous wood,

And vengeful slaughter, fierce for human blood.

He sung the Greeks stern-issuing from the steed,
How Ilion burns, how all her fathers bleed ;

How to thy dome, Deiphobus ! ascends 565
The Spartan king ; how Ithacus attends,

(Horrid as Mars,) and how with dire alarms
He fights, subdues; for Pallas strings his arms.
Thus while he sung, Ulysses' griefs renew,
Tears bathe his cheeks, and tears the ground bedew :
As some fond matron views in mortal sight 571
Her husband falling in his country's right :
Frantic thro' clashing swords she runs, she flies,
As ghastly pale he grows, and faints, and dies ;
Close to his breast she grovels on the ground, 575
And bathes with floods of tears the gaping wound ;
She cries, she shrieks ; the fierce insulting foe
Relentless mocks her violence of woe :
To chains condemn'd, as wildly she deplores ;
A widow, and a slave on foreign shores ! 580
So from the sluices of Ulysses' eyes
Fast fell the tears, and sighs succeeded sighs :
Conceal'd he griev'd : the king observ'd alone
The silent tear, and heard the secret groan :
Then to the bard aloud : O cease to sing, 585
Dumb be thy voice, and mute the tuneful string :
To ev'ry note his tears responsive flow,
And his great heart heaves with tumultuous woe :
Thy lay too deeply moves : then cease the lay,
And o'er the banquet ev'ry heart be gay ; 590
This social right demands : for him the sails,
Floating in air, invite th' impelling gales :
His are the gifts of love : the wise and good
Receive the stranger as a brother's blood.
But, friend, discover faithful what I crave, 595
Artful concealment ill becomes the brave :
Say what thy birth, and what the name you bore,
Impos'd by parents in the natal hour ?
(For from the natal hour distinctive names,
One common right, the great and lowly claims :) 600
Say from what city, from what regions tost,
And what inhabitants those regions boast ?
So shalt thou instant reach the realm assign'd,
In wond'rous ships self-mov'd, instinct with wind ;
No helm secures their course, no pilot guides ; 605
Like men intelligent, they plough the tides,
Conscious of ev'ry coast, and ev'ry bay,
That lies beneath the sun's all-seeing ray ;

Tho' clouds and darkness veil th' encumber'd sky,
Fearless thro' darkness and thro' clouds they fly : 610
Tho' tempests rage, tho' rolls the swelling main,
The sea may roll, the tempests rage in vain ;
Ev'n the stern god that o'er the waves presides,
Safe as they pass, and safe repass the tides,
With fury burns ; while careless they convey 615
Promiscuous every guest to every bay.
These ears have heard my royal sire disclose
A dreadful story, big with future woes,
How Neptune rag'd, and how by his command.
Firm rooted in the surge a ship should stand, 620
A monument of wrath : how mound on mound
Should bury these proud tow'rs beneath the ground.
But this the gods may frustrate or fulfil,
As suits the purpose of th' eternal will.
But say, thro' what waste regions hast thou stray'd, 625
What customs noted, and what coasts survey'd ;
Possess'd by wild barbarians fierce in arms,
Or men, whose bosom tender pity warms !
Say, why the fate of Troy awak'd thy cares,
Why heav'd thy bosom, and why flow'd thy tears ! 630
Just are the ways of heav'n : from heav'n proceed
The woes of man ; heav'n doom'd the Greeks to bleed,
A theme of future song ! Say then, if slain
Some dear-lov'd brother press'd the Phrygian plain !
Or bled some friend, who bore a brother's part, 635
And claim'd by merit, not by blood, the heart.

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK IX.

The Argument.

The Adventures of the Cicons, Lotophagi, and Cyclops.

ULYSSES begins the relation of his adventures: how, after the destruction of Troy, he, with his companions, made an incursion on the Cicons, by whom they were repuls'd; and meeting with a storm, were driven to the coast of the Lotophagi. From thence they sailed to the land of the Cyclops, whose manners and situation are particularly characterised. The giant Polyphemus and his cave described; the usage Ulysses and his companions met there; and lastly, the method and artifice by which he escaped.

THEN thus Ulysses. Thou, whom first in sway,
As first in virtue, these thy realms obey:
How sweet the products of a peaceful reign!
The heav'n-taught poet, and enchanting strain;
The well-fill'd palace, the perpetual feast, 5
A land rejoicing, and a people blest!
How goodly seems it, ever to employ
Man's social days in union and in joy;
The plenteous board high-heap'd with cates divine,
And o'er the foaming bowl the laughing wine! 10
Amid these joys, why seeks thy mind to know
Th' unhappy series of a wand'rer's woe;
Remembrance sad, whose image to review,
Alas! must open all my wounds anew.
And oh, what first, what last shall I relate, 15
Of woes unnumber'd sent by heav'n and fate!
Know first the man (tho' now a wretch distrest)
Who hopes thee, monarch, for his future guest.

Behold Ulysses ! no ignoble name,
Earth sounds my wisdom, and high heav'n my fame. 20
My native soil is Ithaca the fair,
Where high Neritus waves his woods in air :
Dulichium, Same, and Zacynthus, crown'd
With shady mountains, spread their isles around.
(These to the north and nights dark regions run, 25
Those to Aurora and the rising sun).
Low lies our isle, yet blest in fruitful stores ;
Strong are her sons, tho' rocky are her shores ;
And none, ah none so lovely to my sight,
Of all the lands that heav'n o'erspreads with light ! 30
In vain Calypso long constrain'd my stay,
With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay ;
With all her charms as vainly Circe strove,
And added magic, to secure my love.
In poms or joys, the palace or the grot, 35
My country's image never was forgot.
My absent parents rose before my sight,
And distant lay contentment and delight.
Hear then the woes, which mighty Jove ordain'd
To wait my passage from the Trojan land, 40
The winds from Ilion to the Cicons' shore,
Beneath cold Ismarus, our vessel bore,
We boldly landed on the hostile place,
And sack'd the city and destroy'd the race,
Their wives made captive, their possessions shar'd, 45
And every soldier found a like reward.
I then advis'd to fly ; not so the rest,
Who staid to revel, and prolong the feast :
The fatted sheep and sable bulls they slay,
And bowls fly round, and riot wastes the day. 50
Mean time the Cicons, to their holds retir'd,
Call on the Cicons, with new fury fir'd ;
With early morn the gather'd country swarms,
And all the continent is bright with arms :
Thick as the budding leaves or rising flow'rs 55
O'erspread the land, when spring descends in show'rs :
All expert soldiers, skill'd on foot to dare,
Or from the bounding courser urge the war.
Now fortune changes, (so the fates ordain),
Our hour was come to taste our share of pain,

Close at the ships the bloody fight began,
 Wounded they wound, and man expires on man.
 Long as the morning-sun, increasing bright,
 O'er heav'n's pure azure spread the growing light,
 Promiscuous death the form of war confounds, 65
 Each adverse battle gor'd with equal wounds :
 But when his ev'ning-wheels o'erhung the main,
 The conquest crown'd the fierce Ciconian train.
 Six brave companions from each ship we lost,
 The rest escape in haste, and quit the coast. 70
 With sails outspread we fly th' unequal strife,
 Sad for their loss, but joyful of our life.
 Yet, as we fled, our fellow-rites we paid,
 And thrice we call'd on each unhappy shade. 74
 Mean while the god, whose hand the thunder forms
 Drives clouds on clouds, and blackens heav'n with storms:
 Wide o'er the waste the rage of Boreas sweeps,
 And night rush'd headlong on the shaded deeps.
 Now here, now there, the giddy ships are borne,
 And all the rattling shrouds in fragments torn. 80
 We furl'd the sail, we ply'd the lab'ring oar,
 Took down our masts, and row'd our ships to shore.
 Two tedious days and two long nights we lay,
 O'ermatch'd and batter'd in the naked bay.
 But the third morning when Aurora brings, 85
 We rear the masts, we spread the canvass wings ;
 Refresh'd, and careless on the deck reclin'd,
 We sit, and trust the pilot and the wind.
 Then to my native country had I sail'd ;
 But, the cape doubled, adverse winds prevail'd. 90
 Strong was the tide, which by the northern blast
 Impell'd, our vessels on Cythera cast.
 Nine days our fleet th' uncertain tempest bore
 Far in wide ocean, and from sight of shore ;
 The tenth we touch'd, by various errors tost, 95
 The land of Lotos, and the flow'ry coast.
 We climb'd the beach, and springs of water found,
 Then spread our hasty banquet on the ground,
 Three men were sent, deputed from the crew,
 (An herald one), the dubious coast to view, 100

And learn what habitants possess the place,
 They went, and found an hospitable race :
 Not prone to ill, nor strange to foreign guest ;
 They eat, they drink, and nature gives the feast :
 The trees around them all their food produce ; 105
 Lotos the name, divine, nectareous juice !
 (Thence call'd Lotophagi), which whoso tastes,
 Insatiate riots in the sweet repasts,
 Nor other home nor other care intends,
 But quits his house, his country, and his friends : 110
 The three we sent, from off th' enchanting ground
 We dragg'd reluctant, and by force we bound :
 The rest in haste forsook the pleasing shore,
 Or, the charm tasted, had return'd no more.
 Now, plac'd in order on their banks, they sweep 115
 The sea's smooth face, and cleave the hoary deep ;
 With heavy hearts we labour thro' the tide
 To coasts unknown, and oceans yet untry'd.

The land of Cyclops first ; a savage kind,
 Nor tam'd by manners, nor by laws confin'd : 120
 Untaught to plant, to turn the glebe, and sow ;
 They all their products to free nature owe.
 The soil untill'd a ready harvest yields,
 With wheat and barley wave the golden fields,
 Spontaneous wines from weighty clusters pour, 125
 And Jove descends in each prolific show'r.
 By these no statutes and no rights are known,
 No council held, no monarch fills the throne,
 But high on hills or airy cliffs they dwell,
 Or deep in caves whose entrance leads to hell. 130
 Each rules his race, his neighbour not his care,
 Heedless of others, to his own severe.

Oppos'd to the Cyclopean coasts, there lay
 An isle, whose hills their subject fields survey ;
 Its name Lachæa, crown'd with many a grove, 135
 Where savage goats thro' pathless thickets rove :
 No needy mortals here, with hunger bold,
 Or wretched hunters, thro' the wintry cold
 Pursue their flight, but leave them safe to bound
 From hill to hill, o'er all the desert ground. 140
 Nor knows the soil to feed the fleecy care,
 Or feels the labours of the crooked share ;

But uninhabited, untill'd, unsown,
 It lies, and breeds the bleating goat alone :
 For there no vessel with vermillion prore, 145
 Or bark of traffic, glides from shore to shore :
 The rugged race of savages, unskill'd
 The seas to traverse, or the ships to build,
 Gaze on the coast, nor cultivate the soil;
 Unlearn'd in all th' industrious arts of toil. 150
 Yet here all products and all plants abound,
 Sprung from the fruitful genius of the ground :
 Fields waving high with heavy crops are seen,
 And vines that flourish in eternal green ;
 Refreshing meads along the murm'ring main, 155
 And fountains streaming down the fruitful plain.
 A port there is, inclos'd on either side,
 Where ships may rest, unanchor'd and unty'd ;
 Till the glad mariners incline to sail,
 And the sea whitens with the rising gale. 160
 High at its head, from out the cavern'd rock
 In living rills a gushing fountain broke :
 Around it, and above, for ever green,
 The bushing alders form'd a shady scene.
 Hither some fav'ring god, beyond our thought, 165
 Thro' all-surrounding shade our navy brought ;
 For gloomy nigh descended on the main,
 Nor glimmer'd Phœbe in th' ethereal plain :
 But all unseen the clouded island lay,
 And all unseen the surge and rolling sea, 170 }
 'Till safe we anchor'd in the shelter'd bay :
 Our sails we gather'd, cast our cables o'er,
 And slept secure along the sandy shore.
 Soon as again the rosy morning shone,
 Reveal'd the landscape and the scene unknown, 175
 With wonder seiz'd, we view the pleasing ground,
 And walk delighted, and expatiate round.
 Rous'd by the woodland nymphs, at early dawn,
 The mountain goats came bounding o'er the lawn :
 In haste our fellows to the ships repair, 180
 For arms and weapons of the silvan war ;
 Straight in three squadrons all our crew we part,
 And bend the bow, or wing the missile dart ;

The bounteous gods afford a copious prey,
And nine fat goats each vessel bears away : 185
The royal bark had ten. Our ships complete
We thus supply'd, (for twelve were all the fleet).

Here, till the setting sun roll'd down the light,

We sat indulging in the genial rite :

Nor wines were wanting ; those from ample jars 190

We drain'd, the prize of our Ciconian wars.

The land of Cyclops lay in prospect near ;

The voice of goats and bleating flocks we hear,

And from their mountains rising smokes appear.

Now sunk the sun, and darkness cover'd o'er 195

The face of things : along the sea-beat shore

Satiate we slept : but when the sacred dawn

Arising glitter'd o'er the dewy lawn,

I call'd my fellows and these words address ::

My dear associates, here indulge your rest : 200

While, with my single ship, advent'rous, I

Go forth, the manners of yon men to try ;

Whether a race unjust, of barb'rous might,

Rude, and unconscious of a stranger's right ;

Or such who harbour pity in their breast, 205

Revere the gods, and succour the distrest ?

This said, I climb'd my vessel's lofty side ;

My train obey'd me and the ship unty'd.

In order seated on their banks, they sweep

Neptune's smooth face, and cleave the yielding deep.

When to the nearest verge of land we drew, 211

Fast by the sea a lonely cave we view,

High, and with dark'ning laurels cover'd o'er ;

Where sheep and goats lay slumb'ring round the shore.

Near this, a fence of marble from the rock, 215

Brown with o'er-arching pine, and spreading oak,

A giant-shepherd here his flock maintains

Far from the rest, and solitary reigns,

In shelter thick of horrid shade reclin'd ;

And gloomy mischiefs labour in his mind. 220

A form enormous ! far unlike the race

Of human birth, in stature, and in face ;

As some lone mountain's monstrous growth he stood,

Crown'd with rough thickets, and a nodding wood,

I left my vessel at the point of land, 225
 And close to guard it gave our crew command :
 With only twelve the boldest and the best,
 I seek th' adventure, and forsake the rest.
 Then took a goat-skin fill'd with precious wine,
 The gift of Maron of Evantheus' line, 230 }
 (The priest of Phœbus at th' Ismarian shrine),
 In sacred shade his honour'd mansion stood
 Amidst Apollo's consecrated wood :
 Him, and his house, heav'n mov'd my mind to save,
 And costly presents in return he gave ; 235
 Seven golden talents to perfection wrought,
 A silver bowl that held a copious draught,
 And twelve large vessels of unmingled wine,
 Melliflous, undecaying, and divine !
 Which now some ages from his race conceal'd, 240
 The hoary sire in gratitude reveal'd ;
 Such was the wine : to quench whose fervent steam,
 Scarce twenty measures from the living stream
 To cool one cup suffic'd : the goblet crown'd
 Breath'd aromatic fragrances around. 245
 Of this an ample vase we heav'd aboard,
 And brought another with provisions stor'd.
 My soul foreboded I should find the bow'r
 Of some fell monster, fierce with barb'rous pow'r,
 Some rustic wretch, who liv'd in heav'n's despight, 250
 Contemning laws, and trampling on the right.
 The cave we found, but vacant all within,
 (His flock the giant tended on the green),
 But round the grot we gaze : and all we view,
 In order rang'd, our admiration drew : 255
 The bending shelves with loads of cheeses prest,
 The folded flocks each sep'rate from the rest ;
 (The larger here, and there the lesser lambs,
 The new fall'n young here bleating for their dams ;
 The kid distinguish'd from the lambkin lies) ; 260
 The cavern echoes with responsive cries,
 Capacious chargers all around were laid,
 Full pails, and vessels of the milking trade.
 With fresh provisions hence our fleet to store
 My friends advise me, and to quit the shore ; 265

Or drive a flock of sheep and goats away,
 Consult our safety, and put off to sea.
 Their wholesome counsel rashly I declin'd,
 Curious to view the man of monstrous kind,
 And try what social rites a savage lends; 270
 Dire rites, alas! and fatal to my friends!

Then first a fire we kindle, and prepare,
 For his return with sacrifice and pray'r.
 The loaden shelves afford us full repast;
 We sit expecting. Lo! he comes at last. 275
 Near half a forest on his back he bore,
 And cast the pond'rous burden at the door.
 It thunder'd as it fell. We trembled then,
 And sought the deep recesses of the den.

Now driv'n before him, thro' the arching rock, 280
 Came tumbling, heaps on heaps, th' unnumber'd flock;
 Big-udder'd ewes, and goats of female kind,
 (The males were penn'd in outward courts behind);
 Then heav'd on high, a rock's enormous weight
 To the cave's mouth he roll'd, and clos'd the gate. 285
 (Scarce twenty four wheel'd cars, compact and strong,
 The massy load could bear, or roll along.)

He next betakes him to his ev'ning cares,
 And sitting down, to milk his flocks prepares;
 Of half the udders eases first the dams, 290
 Then to the mother's teat submit the lambs.
 Half the white stream to hard'ning cheese he prest,
 And high in wicker-baskets heap'd; the rest,
 Reserv'd in bowls, supply'd his nightly feast. }
 His labour done, he fir'd the pile, that gave 295
 A sudden blaze, and lighted all the cave.

We stand discover'd by the rising fires,
 Askance the giant glares, and thus inquires.

What are ye, guests; on what adventure, say,
 Thus far ye wander thro' the watry way? 300
 Pirates perhaps, who seek thro' seas unknown
 The lives of others, and expose your own?

His voice like thunder thro' the cavern sounds:
 My bold companions thrilling fear confounds,
 Appall'd at sight of more than mortal man! 305
 At length, with heart recover'd, I began.

From Troy's fam'd fields, sad wand'ers o'er the main,
 Behold the relics of the Grecian train!
 Thro' various seas by various perils tost,
 And forc'd by storms, unwilling, on your coast; 310
 Far from our destin'd course, and native land,
 Such was our fate, and such high Jove's command!
 Nor what we are befits us to disclaim,
 Atrides' friends, (in arms a mighty name),
 Who taught proud Troy and all her sons to bow; 315
 Victors of late, but humble suppliants now!
 Low at thy knee thy succour we implore;
 Respect us, human, and relieve us, poor.
 At least some hospitable gifts bestow;
 'Tis what the happy to th' unhappy owe: 320
 'Tis what the gods require; those gods revere,
 The poor and stranger are their constant care;
 To Jove their cause and their revenge belongs,
 He wanders with them, and he feels their wrongs.
 Fools that ye are! (the savage thus replies, 325
 His inward fury blazing at his eyes);
 Or strangers, distant far from our abodes,
 To bid me rev'rence or regard the gods.
 Know then we Cyclops are a race, above
 Those air bred people and their goat-nurs'd Jove; 330
 And learn, our pow'r proceeds with thee and thine,
 Not as he wills, but as ourselves incline.
 But answer, the good ship that brought ye o'er,
 Where lies she anchor'd? near or off the shore?
 Thus he. His meditated fraud I find, 335
 (Vers'd in the turn of various human kind),
 And cautious thus. Against a dreadful rock,
 Fast by your shore the gallant vessel broke,
 Scarce with these few I 'scap'd; of all my train,
 Whom angry Neptune whelm'd beneath the main; }
 The scatter'd wreck the winds blew back again. 341 }
 He answer'd with his deed. His bloody hand
 Snatch'd two, unhappy! of my martial band:
 And dash'd like dogs against the stony floor;
 The pavement swims with brains and mingled gore.
 Torn limb from limb, he spreads his horrid feast, 346
 And fierce devours it like a mountain beast:

He sucks the marrow, and the blood he drains,
Nor entrails, flesh nor solid bone remains.
We see the death from which we cannot move, 350
And humbled groan beneath the hand of Jove.
His ample maw with human carnage fill'd,
A milky deluge next the giant swill'd;
Then stretch'd in length o'er half the cavern rock
Lay senseless and supine, amidst the flock. 355
To seize the time, and with a sudden wound
To fix the slumb'ring monster to the ground,
My soul impels me; and in act I stand
To draw the sword; but wisdom held my hand.
A deed so rash had finish'd all our fate, 360
No mortal forces from the lofty gate
Could roll the rock. In hopeless grief we lay,
And sigh, expecting the return of day.
Now did the rosy-finger'd morn arise,
And shed her sacred light along the skies. 365
He wakes, he lights the fire, he milks the dams,
And to the mothers teat submits the lambs.
The task thus finish'd of his morning hours,
Two more he snatches, murders and devours.
Then pleas'd, and whistling, drives his flock before;
Removes the rocky mountain from the door, 371
And shuts again: with equal ease dispos'd,
As a light quiver's lid it op'd and clos'd.
His giant voice the echoing region fills:
His flocks, obedient, spread o'er all the hills. 375
Thus left behind, e'en in the last despair
I thought, devis'd, and Pallas heard my pray'r.
Revenge, and doubt, and caution, work'd my breast;
But this of many counsels seem'd the best:
The monster's club within the cave I spy'd, 380
A tree of stateliest growth, and yet undry'd,
Green from the wood; of height and bulk so vast,
The largest ship might claim it for a mast.
This shorten'd of its top, I gave my train
A fathom's length, to shape it and to plain; 385
The narrow'r end I sharpen'd to a spire;
Whose point we harden'd with the force of fire,
And hid it in the dust that strow'd the cave.
Then to my few companions, bold and brave,

Propos'd, who first the ventrous deed should try, 390
In the broad orbit of his monstrous eye

'To plunge the brand, and twirl the pointed wood,
When slumber next should tame the man of blood.

Just as I wish'd, the lots were cast on four:

Myself the fifth. We stand and wait the hour. 395

He comes with ev'ning: all his fleecy flock

Before him march, and pour into the rock:

Not one, or male or female, staid behind:

(So fortune chanc'd, or so some god design'd;)

'Then heaving high the stone's unwieldy weight, 400

He roll'd it on the cave, and clos'd the gate.

First down he sits, to milk the woolly dams,

And then permits their udder to the lambs.

Next seiz'd two wretches more, and headlong cast,

Brain'd on the rock; his second dire repast. 405

I then approach'd him, reeking with their gore,

And held the brimming goblet foaming o'er:

Cyclop! since human flesh has been thy feast,

Now drain this goblet, potent to digest:

Know hence what treasures in our ship we lost, 410

And what rich liquors other climates boast.

We to thy shore the precious freight shall bear,

If home thou send us and vouchsafe to spare.

But oh! this furious, thirsting thus for gore,

The sons of men shall ne'er approach thy shore, 415

And never shalt thou taste this nectar more.

He heard, he took, and pouring down his throat,

Delighted, swell'd the large luxurious draught.

More! give me more, he cry'd: the boon be thine,

Whoe'er thou art that bear'st celestial wine! 420

Declare thy name; not mortal is this juice,

Such as th' unblest Cyclopean climes produce;

(Tho' sure our vine the largest cluster yields,

And Jove's scorn'd thunder serves to drench our fields:)

But this descended from the blest abodes, 425

A rill of nectar, streaming from the gods.

He said, and greedy grasp'd the heady bowl,

Thrice drain'd, and pour'd the deluge on his soul.

His sense lay cover'd with the dozy fume;

While thus my fraudulent speech I reassume. 430

Thy promis'd boon, O Cyclop! now I claim,
And plead my title: Noman is my name.
By that distinguish'd from my tender years,
'Tis what my parents call me, and my peers.

The giant then. Our promis'd grace receive, 435
The hospitable boon we mean to give:
When all thy wretched crew have felt my pow'r,
Noman shall be the last I will devour.

He said: then nodding with the fumes of wine,
Dropt his huge head, and snoring lay supine, 440
His neck obliquely o'er his shoulder hung,
Prest with the weight of sleep that tames the strong;
There belcht the mingled streams of wine and blood,
And human flesh, his indigested food.

Sudden I stir the embers, and inspire 445
With animating breath the seeds of fire;
Each drooping spirit with bold words repair,
And urge my train the dreadful deed to dare.
The stake now glow'd beneath the burning bed
(Green as it was) and sparkled fiery red. 450

Then forth the vengeful instrument I bring;
With beating hearts my fellows form a ring.
Urg'd by some present god, they swift let fall
The pointed torment on his visual ball;
Myself above them from a rising ground 455
Guide the sharp stake, and twirl it round and round.

As when a shipwright stands his workman o'er,
Who ply the wimble, some huge beam to bore:
Urg'd on all hands it nimbly spins about,
The grain deep-piercing, till it scoops it out; 460
In his broad eye so whirls the fiery wood,

From the pierc'd pupil spouts the boiling blood;
Sing'd are his brows; the scorching lids grow black;
The jelly bubbles, and the fibres crack.
And as when arm'ers temper in the ford 465
The keen-edg'd pole-axe, or the shining sword,

The red-hot metal hisses in the lake;
Thus in his eye-ball hiss'd the plunging stake.
He sends a dreadful groan: the rocks around
Thro' all their inmost winding caves resound. 470
Scar'd we receded. Forth, with frantic hand,
He tore and dash'd on earth the goary brand:

Then calls the Cyclops, all that round him dwell,
With voice like thunder, and a direful yell.
From all their dens the one ey'd race repair, 475
From rifted rocks, and mountains bleak in air.
All haste assembled, at his well-known roar,
Inquire the cause, and crowd the cavern door.

What hurts thee, Polypheme? what strange affright
Thus breaks our slumbers, and disturbs the night! 481
Does any mortal in th' unguarded hour
Of sleep, oppress thee, or by fraud or pow'r!
Or thieves insidious thy fair flock surprise?
Thus they, the Cyclop from his den replies.

Friends, Noman kills me; Noman, in the hour 485
Of sleep, oppresses me with fraudulent pow'r.
'If no man hurt thee, but the hand divine
'Inflict disease, it fits thee to resign:
'To Jove or to thy father Neptune pray;
The brethren cry'd, and instant strode away. 490

Joy touch'd my secret soul, and conscious heart,
Pleas'd with th' effect of conduct and of art.
Mean time the Cyclop, raging with his wound,
Spreads his wide arms, and searches round and round:
At last, the stone removing from the gate, 495
With hands extended in the midst he sat;
And search'd each passing sheep, and felt it o'er,
Secure to seize us ere we reach'd the door.

(Such as his shallow wit he deem'd was mine;)
But secret I revolv'd the deep design; 500
'Twas for our lives my lab'ring bosom wrought;
Each scheme I turn'd, and sharpen'd ev'ry thought:
This way and that I cast, to save my friends,
Till one resolve my varying counsel ends.

Strong were the rams, with native purple fair, 505
Well fed, and largest of the fleecy care.

These, three and three, with osier bands we ty'd,
(The twining bands the Cyclop's bed supply'd,)
The midmost bore a man; the outward two
Secur'd each side: so bound we all the crew. 510
One ram remain'd, the leader of the flock,
In his deep fleece my grasping hands I lock,
And fast beneath, in woolly curls inwove,
'There cling implicit, and confide in Joye.

When rosy morning glimmer'd o'er the dales, 515
He drove to pasture all the lusty males ;
The ewes still folded, with distended thighs
Unmilk'd, lay bleating in distressful cries.

But headless of those cares, with anguish stung,
He felt their fleeces as they pass'd along, 520
(Fool that he was) and let them safely go,
All unsuspecting of their freight below.

The master ram at last approach'd the gate,
Charg'd with his wool, and with Ulysses' fate.
Him while he past the monster blind bespoke ; 525
What makes my ram the lag of all the flock ?
First thou art wont to crop the flow'ry mead,
First to the field and river's bank to lead,
And first with stately step at ev'ning hour
'Thy fleecy fellows usher to their bow'r. 530

Now far the last, with pensive pace and slow
Thou mov'st, as conscious of thy master's woe !
Seest thou these lids that now infold in vain ?
(The deed of Noman and his wicked train :)
Oh ! didst thou feel for thy afflicted lord, 535
And wou'd but fate the pow'r of speech afford ;
Soon might'st thou tell me where in secret here
'The dastard lurks, all trembling with his fear :
Swung round and round, and dash'd from rock to rock,
His batter'd brains shou'd on the pavement smoke. 540
No ease, no pleasure my sad heart receives,
While such a monster as vile Noman lives.

The giant spoke, and thro' the hollow rock
Dismiss'd the ram, the father of the flock.
No sooner freed, and thro' th' inclosure past, 545
First I release myself, my fellows last :
Fat sheep and goats in throngs we drive before,
And reach our vessel on the winding shore.
With joy the sailors view their friends return'd,
And hail us living whom as dead they mourn'd. 550
Big tears of transport stand in ev'ry eye,
I check their fondness, and command to fly.
Aboard in haste they heave the wealthy sheep,
And snatch their oars, and rush into the deep.

Now off at sea, and from the shallows clear, 555
As far as human voice could reach the ear ;

With taunts the distant giant I accost,
Hear me, oh Cyclop! hear ungracious host!
'Twas on no coward, no ignoble slave,
Thou meditat'st thy meal in yonder cave; 560
But one, the vengeance fated from above
Doom'd to inflict; the instrument of Jove.
Thy barb'rous breach of hospitable bands,
The god, the god revenges by my hands.

These words the Cyclop's hunting rage provoke;
From the tall hill he rends a pointed rock; 566
High o'er the billows flew the massy load,
And near the ship came thund'ring on the flood.
It almost brush'd the helm, and fell before;
The whole sea shook, and reflux beat the shore. 570
The strong concussion on the heaving tide
Roll'd back the vessel to the islands side;
Again I shov'd her off; our fate to fly.
Each nerve we stretch, and ev'ry oar we ply,
Just 'scap'd impending death, when now again 575
We twice as far had furrow'd back the main,
Once more I raise my voice; my friends, afraid,
With mild entreaties my design dissuade.
What boots the godless giant to provoke?
Whose arm may sink us at a single stroke. 580
Already, when the dreadful rock he threw,
Old Ocean shook, and back his surges flew.
Thy sounding voice directs his aim again,
The rock o'erwhelms us, and we 'scap'd in vain.

But I, of mind elate, and scorning fear, 585
Thus with new taunts insult the monster's ear.
Cyclop! if any, pitying thy disgrace,
Ask who disfigur'd thus that eye-less face?
Say, 'twas Ulysses; 'twas his deed declare,
Laertes' son, of Ithaca the fair; 590
Ulysses, far in fighting fields renown'd,
Before whose arm Troy tumbled to the ground.

Th' astonish'd savage with a roar replies:
Oh heav'ns! oh faith of ancient prophecies!
This, Telemes Eurymedes foretold, 595
(The mighty seer who on these hills grew old;
Skill'd in the dark fates of mortals to declare,
And learn'd in allwing'd omens of the air,)

Long since he menac'd, such was fate's command,
And nam'd Ulysses as the destin'd hand, 600
I deem'd some godlike giant to behold,
Or lofty hero, haughty, brave and bold ;
Not this weak pigmy wretch, of mean design,
Who not by strength subdu'd me, but by wine.
But come accept our gifts, and join to pray 605
Great Neptune's blessing on the watry way:
For his I am, and I the lineage own :
Th' immortal father no less boasts the son.
His pow'r can heal me, and re-light my eye,
And only his, of all the gods on high. 610
Oh ! could this arm (I thus aloud rejoin'd)
From that vast bulk dislodge thy bloody mind,
And send thee howling to the realms of night !
As sure as Neptune cannot give thee sight,
Thus I : while raging he repeats his cries, 615
With hands uplifted to the starry skies.
Hear me, oh Neptune ! thou whose arms are hurl'd
From shore to shore, and gird the solid world.
If thine I am, nor thou my birth disown.
And if th' unhappy Cyclop be thy son : 620
Let not Ulysses breath his native air,
Laertes' son of Ithaca the fair.
If to review his country be his fate,
Be it thro' toils and suff'rings, long and late,
His lost companions let him first deplore ; 625
Some vessel, not his own, transport him o'er ;
And when at home from foreign suff'rings freed,
More near and deep, domestic woes succeed !
With imprecations thus he fill'd the air,
And angry Neptune heard the unrighteous pray'r. 630
A larger rock then heaving from the plain,
He whirl'd it round : it sung across the main :
It fell, and brush'd the stern : the billows roar,
Shake at the weight, and reflux beat the shore.
With all our force we kept aloof to sea, 635
And gain'd the island where our vessels lay.
Our sight the whole collected navy cheer'd,
Who, waiting long by turns had hop'd and fear'd.
There disembarking on the green sea-side,
We land our cattle, and the spoil divide : 640

Of these due shares to ev'ry sailor fall,
The master ram was voted mine by all :
And him (the guardian of Ulysses' fate)
With pious mind to heav'n I consecrate.
But the great god, whose thunder rends the skies, 645
Averse beholds the smoking sacrifice ;
And sees my wand'ring still from coast to coast ;
And all my vessels, all my people lost !

While thoughtless we indulge the genial rite,
As plenteous cates and flowing bowls invite ; 650 }
Till ev'ning Phœbus roll'd away the light :
Stretch'd on the shore in careless ease we rest,
Till ruddy morning purpled o'er the east.
Then from their anchors all our ships unbind,
And mount the decks, and call the willing wind. 655
Now, rang'd in order on our banks, we sweep
With hasty strokes the hoarse resounding deep ;
Blind to the future, pensive with our fears,
Glad for the living, for the dead in tears.

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK X.

The Argument.

Adventures with Æolus, the Lestrigons, and Circe:

ULYSSES arrives at the island of Æolus, who gives him prosperous winds, and incloses the adverse ones in a bag, which his companions untying, they are driven back again, and rejected. Then they sail to the Lestrigons, where they lose eleven ships, and, with one only remaining, proceed to the island of Circe. Eurylochus is sent first with some companions, all which, except Eurylochus, are transformed into swine. Ulysses then undertakes the adventure, and by the help of Mercury, who gives him the herb Moly, overcomes the enchantress, and procures the restoration of his men. After a year's stay with her, he prepares at her instigation for his voyage to the infernal shades.

At length we reach'd Æolia's sea-girt shore,
Where great Hippotades the sceptre bore,
A floating isle! high rais'd by toil divine,
Strong walls of brass the rocky coast confine. 5
Six blooming youths, in private grandeur bred,
And six fair daughters, grac'd the royal bed;
These sons their sisters wed, and all remain,
Their parents pride and pleasure of their reign.
All day the feast all day the bowls flow round,
And joy and music thro' the isle resound; 10
At night each pair on splendid carpets lay,
And crown with love the pleasures of the day.
This happy port affords our wand'ring fleet
A month's reception, and a safe retreat.
Full oft the monarch urg'd me to relate 15
The fall of Ilion, and the Grecian fate;

Full oft I told: at length for parting mov'd ;
 The king with mighty gifts my suit approv'd.
 The adverse winds in leathern bags he brac'd,
 Compress'd their force, and lock'd each struggling blast:
 For him the mighty sire of gods assign'd 21
 The tempest's lord, and tyrant of the wind;
 His word alone the list'ning storms obey,
 To smooth the deep, or swell the foamy sea.
 These in my hollow ship the monarch hung, 25
 Securely fetter'd by a silver thong ;
 But Zephyrus exempt, with friendly gales
 He charg'd to fill, and guide the swelling sails :
 Rare gift ! but oh, what gift to fools avails !
 Nine prosp'rous days we ply'd the lab'ring oar ; 30
 The tenth presents our welcome native shore ;
 The hills display the beacon's friendly light,
 And rising mountains gain upon our sight.
 Then first my eyes, by watchful toils opprest,
 Comply'd to take the balmy gifts of rest ; 35
 Then first my hands did from the rudder part,
 (So much the love of home possess'd my heart,)
 When, lo ! on board a fond debate arose,
 What rare device those vessels might inclose ?
 What sum, what prize from Æolus I brought ? 40
 Whilst to his neighbour each express'd his thought.
 Say, whence, ye gods, contending nations strive
 Who most shall please, who most our hero give ;
 Long have his coffers groan'd with Trojan spoils ;
 Whilst we, the wretched part'ners of his toils, 45
 Reproach'd by want, our fruitless labours mourn,
 And only rich in barren fame return.
 Now Æolus, ye see, augments his store ;
 But come, my friends, these mystic gifts explore.
 They said : and (oh curs'd fate !) the thongs unbound !
 The gushing tempest sweeps the ocean round ! 51
 Snatch'd in the whirl, the hurried navy flew,
 The ocean widen'd, and the shores withdrew.
 Rouz'd from my fatal sleep, I long debate
 If still to live, or desp'rate plunge to fate : 55
 Thus doubting, prostrate on the deck I lay,
 Till all the coward thoughts of death gave way.

Mean while our vessels plough the liquid plain,
 And soon the known Æolian coast regain,
 Our groans the rocks remurmur'd to the main } 60
 We leap'd on shore, and with a scanty feast
 Our thirst and hunger hastily repress'd ;
 That done, two chosen heralds strait attend
 Our second progress to my royal friend :
 And him amidst his jovial sons we found ; } 65
 The banquet streaming, and the goblets crown'd :
 There humbly stopp'd with conscious shame and awe,
 Nor nearer than the gate presum'd to draw.
 But soon his sons their well-known guest descry'd,
 And starting from their couches loudly cry'd, } 70
 Ulysses here ! what dæmon couldst thou meet
 To thwart thy passage, and repel thy fleet ?
 Wast thou not furnish'd by our choicest care
 For Greece, for home, and all thy soul held dear ?
 Thus they : in silence long my fate I mourn'd, } 75
 At length these words with accent low return'd.
 Me, lock'd in sleep, my faithless crew bereft
 Of all the blessings of our god-like gift !
 But grant, oh grant our loss we may retrieve :
 A favour you, and you alone can give. } 80

Thus I with art to move their pity try'd,
 And touch'd the youths ; but their stern sire reply'd,
 Vile wretch, be gone ! this instant I command
 Thy fleet accurs'd to leave our hallow'd land.
 His baneful suit pollutes these bless'd abodes, } 85
 Whose fate proclaims him hateful to the gods.

Thus fierce he said: we sighing went our way,
 And with desponding hearts put off to sea.
 The sailors spent with toils their folly mourn,
 But mourn in vain ; no prospect of return. } 90
 Six days and nights a doubtful course we steer,
 The next proud Lamos' stately tow'rs appear, }
 And Læstrigonia's gates arise distinct in air,
 The shepherd quitting here at night the plain,
 Calls, to succeed his cares, the watchful swain, } 95
 But he that scorns the chains of sleep to wear,
 And adds the herdsman to the shepherd's care,

So near the pastures, and so short the way,
 His double toils may claim a double pay,
 And joy the labours of the night and day. 100 }

Within a long recess a bay there lies,
 Edg'd round with cliffs high pointing to the skies;
 The jutting shores that swell on either side
 Contract its mouth, and break the rushing tide.
 Our eager sailors seize the fair retreat, 105
 And bound within the port their crowded fleet:
 For here retir'd the sinking billows sleep,
 And smiling calmness silver'd o'er the deep.
 I only in the bay refus'd to moor,
 And fix'd, without, my halsers to the shore. 110

From whence we climb'd a point, whose airy brow
 Commands the prospect of the plains below:
 No tracks of beasts, or signs of men, we found,
 But smoky volumes rolling from the ground.
 Two with our herald thither we command, 115
 With speed to learn what men possess'd the land.
 They went, and kept the wheel's smooth beaten road
 Which to the city drew the mountain wood;
 When lo! they met, beside a crystal spring,
 The daughter of Antiphates the king; 120
 She to Artacia's silver streams came down,
 (Artacia's streams alone supply the town);
 The damsel they approach, and ask'd what race
 The people were? who monarch of the place?
 With joy the maid th' unwary strangers heard, 125
 And shew'd them where the royal dome appear'd.
 They went: but as they ent'ring saw the queen,
 Of size enormous, and terrific mien,
 (Not yielding to some bulky mountain's height),
 A sudden horror struck their aking sight. 130
 Swift at her call her husband scour'd away
 To wreak his hunger on the destin'd prey;
 One for his food the raging glutton slew,
 But two rush'd out and to the navy flew.

Balk'd of his prey, the yelling monster flies, 135
 And fills the city with his hideous cries:
 A ghastly band of giants hear the roar,
 And pouring down the mountains, crowd the shore.

Fragments they rend from off the craggy brow,
And dash the ruins on the ships below : 140

The crackling vessels burst : hoarse groans arise,
And mingled horrors echo'd to the skies ;
The men, like fish, they stuck upon the flood,
And cramm'd their filthy throats with human food.
Whilst thus their fury rages at the bay, 145

My sword our cables cut, I call'd to weigh ;
And charg'd my men, as they from fate would fly,
Each nerve to strain, each bending oar to ply.
The sailors catch the word, their oars they seize,
And sweep with equal strokes the smoky seas ; 150

Clear of the rocks th' impatient vessel flies ;
Whilst in the port each wretch encumber'd dies.
With earnest haste my frightened sailors press,
While kindling transports glow'd at our success ;
But the sad fate that did our friends destroy, 155
Cool'd ev'ry breast, and damp'd the rising joy.

Now dropp'd our anchors in th' *Æanean* bay,
Where *Circe* dwelt the daughter of the day ;
Her mother *Perse*, of old *Ocean's* strain,
Thus from the sun descended, and the main ; 160

(From the same lienage stern *Æetes* came,
The far fam'd brother of th' enchantress dame) ;
Goddess, and queen, to whom the pow'rs belong.
Of dreadful magic, and commanding song.
Some god directing, to this peaceful bay, 165

Silent we came, and melancholy lay,
Spent and o'erwatch'd. Two days and nights roll'd on,
And now the third succeeding morning shone,
I climb'd a cliff, with spear and sword in hand,
Whose ridge o'erlook'd a shady length of land ; 170

To learn if aught of mortal works appear,
Or chearful voice of mortal strike the ear,
From the high point I mark'd, in distant view,
A stream of curling smoke, ascending blue,
And spiry tops, the tufted trees above, 175

Of *Circe's* palace bosom'd in the grove.
Thither to haste, the region to explore,
Was first my thought ; but speeding back to shore
I deem'd it best to visit first my crew,
And send out spies the dubious coast to view. 180

As down the hill I solitary go.
 Some pow'r divine, who pities human woe,
 Sent a tall stag, descending from the wood,
 To cool his fervour in the crystal flood ;
 Luxuriant on the wave-worn bank he lay, 185
 Stretch'd forth, and panting in the sunny ray.
 I launch'd my spear, and with a sudden wound
 Transpierc'd his back, and fix'd him to the ground.
 He falls, and mourns his fate with human cries :
 'Thro' the wide wound the vital spirit flies. 190
 I drew, and casting on the river side
 'The bloody spear, his gather'd feet I ty'd
 With twining osiers, which the bank supply'd. }
 An ell in length the pliant whisp I weav'd,
 And the huge body on my shoulders heav'd : 195
 Then leaning on the spear with both my hands,
 Up bore my load, and press'd the sinking sands
 With weighty steps, 'till at the ship I threw
 The welcome burden, and bespoke my crew.
 Chear up my friends ! it is not yet our fate 200
 To glide with ghosts thro' Pluto's gloomy gate.
 Food in the desert land, behold ! is given,
 Live, and enjoy the providence of heav'n.
 The joyful crew survey his mighty size,
 And on the future banquet feast their eyes, 205
 As huge in length extended lay the beast ;
 Then wash their hands, and hasten to the feast.
 There, till the setting sun roll'd down the light,
 They sat indulging in the genial rite.
 When ev'ning rose, and darkness cover'd o'er 210
 The face of things, we slept along the shore.
 But when the rosy morning warm'd the east,
 My men I summon'd, and these words address.
 Foll'wers and friends, attend what I propose :
 Ye sad companions of Ulysses' woes ! 215
 We know not here what land before us lies,
 Or to what quarter now we turn our eyes,
 Or where the sun shall set, or where shall rise.
 Here let us think (if thinking be not vain)
 If any council, any hope remain. 220
 Alas ! from yonder promontory's brow,
 I view'd the coast, a region flat and low

An isle incircled with the boundless flood :
 A length of thickets, and entangled wood.
 Some smoke I saw amid the forest rise, 225
 And all around it only seas and skies !

With broken hearts my sad companions stood,
 Mindful of Cyclops and his human food. }
 And horrid Læstrigons, the men of blood ; }
 Presaging tears apace began to rain ; 230
 But tears in mortal miseries are vain.

In equal parts I straight divide my band,
 And name a chief each party to command ;
 I led the one, and of the other side
 Appointed brave Eurylochus the guide, 235
 Then in the brazen helm the lurs we throw,
 And fortune casts Eurylochus to go :
 He march'd, with twice eleven in his train ;
 Pensive they march, and pensive we remain.

The palace in a woody vale they found, 240
 High rais'd of stone : a shaded space around :
 Where mountain wolves and brindled lions roam,
 (By magic tam'd) familiar to the dome.

With gentle blandishment our men they meet,
 And wag their tails and fawning lick their feet. 245

As from some feast a man returning late,
 His faithful dogs all meet him at the gate,
 Rejoicing round, some morsel to receive,
 (Such as the good man ever us'd to give),
 Domestic thus the grisly beasts drew near : 250

They gaze with wonder, not unmix'd with fear.
 Now on the threshold of the dome they stood,
 And heard a voice resounding thro' the wood.

Plac'd at her loom within, the goddess sung :
 The vaulted roofs and solid pavement rung : 255
 O'er the fair web the rising figures shine !

Immortal labour ! worthy hands divine.
 Polites to the rest the question mov'd,
 (A gallant leader, and a man I lov'd).

What voice celestial, chanting to the loom, 260
 (Or nymph, or goddess), echoes from the room ?
 Say, shall we seek access ? With that they call ;
 And wide unfold the portals of the hall.

The goddess rising, asks her guests to stay,
 Who blindly follow where she leads the way. 265
 Eurylochus, alone of all the band,
 Suspecting fraud, more prudently remain'd.
 On thrones around, with downy cov'rings grac'd,
 With semblance fair th' unhappy men she plac'd.
 Milk newly press'd, the sacred flour of wheat, 270
 And honey fresh, and Pramnian wines the treat :
 But venom'd was the bread, and mix'd the bowl,
 With drugs of force to darken all the soul :
 Soon in the luscious feast themselves they lost,
 And drank oblivion of their native coast. 275
 Instant her circling wand the goddess waves,
 To hogs transforms 'em, and the sty receives.
 No more was seen the human form divine ;
 Head, face and members, bristle into swine ;
 Still curst with sense, their minds remain alone, 280
 And their own voice affrights them when they groan,
 Mean while the goddess in disdain bestows
 The mast and acorn, brutal food : and strows
 The fruits of cornel, as their feast, around ;
 Now prone and grov'ling on unsav'ry ground. 285
 Eurylochus, with pensive steps and slow,
 Aghast returns : the messenger of woe,
 And bitter fate. To speak he made essay ;
 In vain essay'd, nor would his tongue obey,
 His swelling heart deny'd the words their way : 290
 But speaking tears the want of words supply,
 And the full soul bursts copious from his eye.
 Affrighted, anxious for our fellows fates,
 We press to hear what sadly he relates,
 We went, Ulysses : (such was thy command), 295
 Thro' the lone thicket, and the desert land,
 A palace in a woody vale we found
 Brown with dark forests, and with shades around.
 A voice celestial echo'd from the dome,
 Or nymph, or goddess, chanting to the loom, 300
 Access we sought, nor was access deny'd ;
 Radiant she came ; the portals open'd wide :
 The goddess mild invites the guests to stay :
 They blindly follow where she leads the way.

| | | |
|---|------------------|-----|
| Book X. | HOMER'S ODYSSEY. | 153 |
| I only wait behind of all the train, | | 305 |
| I waited long, and ey'd the doors in vain : | | |
| The rest are vanish'd, none repass'd the gate ; | | |
| And not a man appears to tell their fate. | | |
| I heard, and instant o'er my shoulders flung | | |
| The belt in which my weighty falchion hung ; | 310 | |
| (A beamy blade ;) then seiz'd the bended bow, | | |
| And bade him guide the way, resolv'd to go. | | |
| He prostrate falling, with both hands embrac'd | | |
| My knees, and weeping, thus his suit address'd. | | |
| 'O king, belov'd of Jove ! thy servant spare, | 315 | |
| And ah, thyself the rash attempt forbear ! | | |
| Never, alas ! thou never shall return, | | |
| Or see the wretched for whose loss we mourn. | | |
| With what remains from certain ruin fly, | | |
| And save the few not fated yet to die. | 320 | |
| I answer'd stern. Inglorious then remain, | | |
| Here feast and loiter, and desert thy train. | | |
| Alone, unfriended will I tempt my way ; | | |
| The laws of fate compel, and I obey. | | |
| This said, and scornful turning from the shore | 325 | |
| My haughty step, I stalk'd the valley o'er. | | |
| Till now approaching nigh the magic bow'r, | | |
| Where dwelt the enchantress skill'd in herbs of pow'r ; | | |
| A form divine forth issu'd from the wood, | | |
| (Immortal Hermes with the golden rod,) 330 | | |
| In human semblance. On his bloomy face | | |
| Youth smil'd celestial, with each op'ning grace. | | |
| He seiz'd my hand, and gracious thus began | | |
| Ah whither roam'st thou much enduring man ! | | |
| O blind to fate ! what led thy steps to rove 335 | | |
| The horrid mazes of this magic grove ? | | |
| Each friend you seek in yon inclosure lies, | | |
| All lost their form, and habitants of sties. | | |
| Think'st thou by wit to model their escape ? | | |
| Sooner shalt thou, a stranger to thy shape, 340 | | |
| Fall prone their equal ; first thy danger know, | | |
| Then take the antidote the gods bestow. | | |
| The plant I give thro' all the direful bow'r | | |
| Shall guard thee, and avert the evil hour. | | |
| Now hear her wicked arts. Before thy eyes 345 | | |
| The bowl shall sparkle, and the banquet rise ; | | |

Take this, nor from the faithless feast abstain,
For temper'd drugs and poison shall be vain.
Soon as she strikes her wand, and gives the word,
Draw forth and brandish thy refulgent sword, 350
And menace death: those menaces shall move
Her alter'd mind to blandishment and love.
Nor shun the blessing proffer'd to thy arms,
Ascend her bed, and taste celestial charms;
So shall thy tedious toils a respite find, 355
And thy lost friends return to human kind.
But swear her first by those dread oaths that tie
'The pow'rs below, the blessed in the sky :
Lest to thee naked secret fraud be meant,
Or magic bind thee, cold and impotent. 360

Thus while he spoke, the sov'reign plant he drew,
Where on th' all-bearing earth unmark'd it grew,
And shew'd its nature and its wond'rous pow'r :
Black was its toot, but milky-white the flow'r ;
Moly the name, to mortals hard to find, 365
But all is easy to the etherial kind.

This Hermes gave, then gliding off the glade,
Shot to Olympus from the woodland shade.

While full of thought, revolving fates to come,
I speed my passage to th' enchanted dome ; 370
Arriv'd, before the lofty gates I stay'd ;
The lofty gates the goddess wide display'd ;
She leads before, and to the feast invites,
I follow sadly to the magic rites.

Radiant with starry studs, a silver seat 375
Receiv'd my limbs ; a footstool eas'd my feet.
She mix'd the potion, fraudulent of soul,
The poison mantled in the golden bowl.
I took, and quaff'd it, confluent in heav'n :
Then wav'd the wand, and then the word was giv'n.
Hence to thy fellows! (dreadful she began ;) 381
Go, be a beast!—I heard, and yet was man.

Then sudden whirling like a waving flame
My beamy falchion, I assault the dame.
Struck with unusual fear, she trembling cries, 385
She faints, she falls ; she lifts her weeping eyes.

What art thou ! say ! from whence, from whom you came !

O more than human : tell thy race, thy name.
Amazing strength, these poisons to sustain !
Not mortal thou, nor mortal is thy brain. 390
Or art thou he ? the man to come, (foretold
By Hermes pow'rful with the wand of gold,)
The man from Troy, who wander'd ocean round,
The man for wisdom's various arts renown'd,
Ulysses ? Oh ! thy threat'ning fury cease, 395
Sheath thy bright sword, and join our hands in peace ;
Let mutual joys our mutual trust combine,
And love, and love-born confidence be thine.

And how, dread Circe ! (furious I rejoin)
Can love, and love-born confidence be mine. 400
Beneath thy charms when my companions groan,
Transform'd to beast, with accents not their own.
O thou of fraudulent heart ! shall I be led
To share thy feast rites, or ascend thy bed ;
That, all unarm'd, thy vengeance may have vent, 405
And magic bind me cold and impotent ?
Celestial as thou art, yet stand deny'd,
Or swear that oath by which the gods are ty'd,
Swear, in thy soul no latent frauds remain,
Swear, by the vow which never can be vain. 410

The goddess swore : then seiz'd my hand, and led
To the sweet transports of the genial bed.
Ministrant to their queen, with busy care
Four faithful handmaids the soft rites prepare ;
Nymphs sprung from mountains, or from shady woods,
Or the fair offspring of the sacred floods. 416

One o'er the couches painted carpets threw,
Whose purple lustre glow'd against the view :
White linen lay beneath. Another plac'd
The silver stands with golden flaskets grac'd : 420
With dulcet bev'rage this the beaker crown'd,
Fair in the midst, with gilded cups around :
That in the tripod o'er the kindled pile
The water pours ; the bubbling waters boil :
An ample vase receives the smoking wave ; 425
And in the bath prepar'd, my limbs I have :
Reviving sweets repair the minds decay,
And take the painful sense of toil away.

A vest and tunic o'er me next she threw,
Fresh from the bath and dropping balmy dew ; 430
Then led and plac'd me on the sov'reign seat,
With carpets spread ; a footstool at my feet.
The golden ew'r a nymph obsequious brings,
Replenish'd from the cool translucent springs;
With copious water the bright vase supplies 435
A silver laver of capacious size.
I wash'd. The table in fair order spread,
They heap the glitt'ring canisters with bread ;
Viands of various kinds allure the taste,
Of choicest sort and savour, rich repast ! 440
Circe in vain invites the feast to share,
Absent I ponder, and absorpt in care :
While scenes of woe rose anxious in my breast,
The queen beheld me, and these words address.
Why sits Ulysses silent and apart, 445
Some hoard of grief close harbour'd at his heart !
Untouch'd before the stand the cates divine,
And unregarded laughs the rosy wine.
Can yet a doubt, or any dread remain ;
When sworn that oath which never can be vain ? 450
I answer'd, Goddess ! humane is thy breast,
By justice sway'd, by tender pity prest :
Ill fits it me, whose friends are sunk to beasts,
'To quaff thy bowls, or riot in thy feasts.
Me would'st thou please ? for them thy cares employ,
And them to me restore, and me to joy. 456
With that, we parted: in her potent hand
She bore the virtue of the magic wand.
'Then hast'ning to the sties set wide the door,
Urg'd forth, and drove the bristly herd before ; 460
Unwieldy, out they rush'd, with general cry,
Enormous beasts dishonest to the eye.
Now touch'd by counter-charms, they change again,
And stand majestic, and recall'd to men.
Those hairs of late that bristled ev'ry part, 465
Fall off ; miraculous effect of art !
'Till all the form in full proportion rise,
More young, more large, more graceful to my eyes.
'They saw, they knew me, and with eager pace
Clung to their master in a long embrace : 470

Sad pleasing sight ? with tears each eye ran o'er,
And sobs of joy re-echo'd thro' the bow'r ;
Ev'n Circe wept, her adamant heart
Felt pity enter, and sustain'd her part.

Son of Laertes ! (then the queen began,) 475

Oh much-enduring, much experienc'd man !
Haste to thy vessel on the sea beat shore,
Unload thy treasures, and thy galley moor :
Then bring thy friends, secure from future harms,
And in our grottos stow thy spoils and arms. 480

She said. Obedient to her high command
I quit the place, and hasten to the strand.
My sad companions on the beach I found,
Their wistful eyes in floods of sorrow drown'd.
As from fresh pastures and the dewy field 485
(When loaded cribs their ev'ning banquet yield)
The lowing herds return : around them throng
With leaps and bounds their late imprison'd young.
Rush to their mothers with unruly joy.

And echoing hills return the tender cry : 490

So round me press'd, exulting at my sight.
With cries and agonies of wild delight,
The weeping sailors ; nor less fierce their joy
Than if return'd to Ithaca from Troy.
Ah master ! ever honour'd, ever dear, 495

(These tender words on ev'ry side I hear,)
What other joy can equal thy return ?
Not that lov'd country for whose sight we mourn,
The soil that nurs'd us, and that gave us breath :
But ah ! relate our lost companions death. 500

I answer'd cheerful. Haste, your galley moor,
And bring our treasures and our arms ashore :
These in yon hollow caverns let us lay ;
Then rise and follow where I lead the way.
Your fellows live ; believe your eyes and come 505
To take the joys of Circe's sacred dome.

With ready speed the joyful crew obey :
Alone Eurylochus persuades their stay.
Whither, (he cry'd,) ah whither will ye run !
Seek ye to meet those evils ye should shun ? 510
Will you the terrors of the dome explore,
In swine to grovel, or in lions roar,

Or wolf-like howl away the midnight hour
 In dreadful watch around the magic bow'r?
 Remember Cyclops, and his bloody deed; 515
 The leader's rashness made the soldiers bleed.

I heard incens'd, and first resolv'd to speed
 My flying falchion at the rebel's head.
 Dear as he was, by ties of kindred bound,
 'This hand had stretch'd him breathless on the ground;
 But all at once my interposing train 521
 For mercy pleaded, nor could plead in vain.
 Leave here the man who dares his prince desert,
 Leave to repentance and his own sad heart,
 To guard the ship. Seek we the sacred shades 525
 Of Circe's palace where Ulysses leads.

This with one voice declar'd, the rising train
 Left the black vessel by the murm'ring main.
 Shame touch'd Eurylochus' alter'd breast,
 He fear'd my threats, and follow'd with the rest. 530

Mean while the goddess, with indulgent cares
 And social joys, the late transform'd repairs;
 'The bath, the feast, their fainting soul renews,
 Rich in refulgent robes, and dropping balmy dews;
 Bright'ning with joy their eager eyes behold 535
 Each other's face, and each his story told;
 Then gushing tears the narrative confound,
 And with their sobs the vaulted roofs resound.

When hush'd their passion, thus the goddess cries;
 Ulysses, taught by labours to be wise, 540
 Let this short memory of grief suffice.

To me are known the various woes ye bore,
 In storms by sea, in perils on the shore;
 Forget whatever was in fortune's pow'r,
 And share the pleasures of this genial hour. 545
 Such be your minds as ere you left your coast,
 Or learn'd to sorrow for a country lost.

Exiles and wand'ers now, where-e'er ye go
 Too faithful memory renews your woe;
 'The cause remov'd, habitual griefs remain, 550
 And the soul saddens by the use of pain.

Her kind intreaty mov'd the gen'ral breast,
 'Tir'd with long toil, we willing sunk to rest.

We ply'd the banquet, and the bowl we crown'd,
Till the full circle of the year came round. 555

But when the seasons, following in their train,
Brought back the months, the days and hours again;
As from a lethargy at once they rise,
And urge their chief with animating cries.

Is this, Ulysses, our inglorious lot!
And is the name of Ithaca forgot!
Shall never the dear land in prospect rise
Or the lov'd palace glitter in our eyes? 560

Melting I heard till yet the sun's decline
Prolong'd the feast, and quaff'd the rosy wine: 565

But when the shades came on at ev'ning hour,
And all lay slumb'ring in the dusky bow'r;
I came a suppliant to fair Circe's bed,

The tender moment seiz'd, and thus I said.
Be mindful, goddess of thy promise made; 570
Must sad Ulysses ever be delay'd?

Around their lord my sad companions mourn,
Each breast beats homeward, anxious to return!
If but a moment parted from thy eyes,
Their tears flow round me, and my heart complies.

Go then, (she cry'd,) ah go? yet think not I, 576
Not Circe, but the fates your wish deny.

Ah hope not yet to breath thy native air!
Far other journey first demands thy care!
To tread th' uncomfortable paths beneath, 580

And view the realms of darkness and of death.
There seek the Theban bard depriv'd of sight,
Within, irradiate with prophetic light;
To whom Persephone, entire and whole,
Gave to retain th' unseparated soul: 585

The rest are forms, of empty Æther made;
Impassive semblance, and a flitting shade.

Struck at the word, my very heart was dead:
Pensive I sat; my tears bedew'd the bed;
To hate the light and life my soul begun, 590
And saw that all was grief beneath the sun.

Compos'd at length, the gushing tears supprest,
And my tost limbs now weary'd into rest,
How shall I tread, (I cry'd,) ah Circe I say,
The dark descent, and who shall guide the way? 595

Can living eyes behold the realms below ?
What bark to waft me, and what wind to blow ?
Thy fated road, (the magic pow'r reply'd,)
Divine Ulysses ! asks no mortal guide.
Rear but the mast, the spacious sail display, 600
The northern winds shall wing thee on thy way.
Soon shalt thou reach old Ocean's utmost ends,
Where to the main the shelving shore descends;
The barren trees of Proserpine's black woods,
Poplars and willows trembling o'er the floods : 605
There fix thy vessel in the lonely bay,
And enter there the kingdoms void of day:
Where Phlegeton's loud torrents rushing down,
Hiss in the flaming gulf of Acheron!
And where slow-rolling from the Stygian bed, 610
Cocytus' lamentable waters spread ;
Where the dark rock o'erhangs th' infernal lake,
And mingling streams eternal murmurs make,
First draw thy falchion, and on ev'ry side
Trench the black earth a cubit long and wide : 615
To all the shades around libations pour,
And o'er th' ingredients strow the hallow'd flour :
New wine and milk, with honey temper'd, bring,
And living water from the crystal spring.
Then the wan shades and feeble ghosts implore, 620
With promis'd off'rings on thy native shore ;
A barren cow, the stateliest of the isle,
And, heap'd with various wealth, a blazing pile :
These to the rest ; but to the seer must bleed
A sable ram, the pride of all thy breed. 625
These solemn vows and holy off'rings paid
To all the phantom-nations of the dead ;
Be next thy care the sable sheep to place
Full o'er the pit, and hell-ward turn their face :
But from th' infernal rite thine eye withdraw, 630
And back to ocean glance with rev'rend awe.
Sudden shall skim along the dusky glades,
Thin airy shoals, and visionary shades.
Then give command the sacrifice to haste,
Let the slay'd victims in the flames be cast, 635
And sacred vows, and mystic song, apply'd
To grisly Pluto, and his gloomy bride.

Wide o'er the pool thy falchion wav'd around
Shall drive the spectres from forbidden ground :
The secret draught shall all the dead forbear, 640
Till awful from the shades arise the seer.
Let him, oraculous, the end, the way,
The turns of all thy future fate, display,
Thy pilgrimage to come, and remnant of thy day. }
So speaking, from the ruddy orient shone 645
The morn conspicuous on her golden throne.
The goddess with a radiant tunic drest
My limbs and o'er me cast a silken vest.
Long flowing robes, of purest white, array
The nymph, that added lustre to the day : 650
A tiar wreath'd her head with many a fold :
Her waste was circled with a zone of gold.
Forth issuing then, from place to place I flew ;
Rouze man by man, and animate my crew ;
Rise, rise my mates ! 'tis Circe gives command : 655
Our journey calls us ; haste, and quit the land.
All rise and follow, yet depart not all,
For fate decreed one wretched man to fall.
A youth there was, Elpenor was he nam'd,
Nor much for sense, nor much for courage fam'd ; 660
The youngest of our band, a vulgar soul,
Born but to banquet, and to drain the bowl.
He, hot and careless, on a turret's height
With sleep repair'd the long debauch of night :
The sudden tumult stirr'd him where he lay, 665
And down he hasten'd, but forgot the way ;
Full headlong from the roof the sleeper fell,
And snapp'd the spinal joint, and wak'd in hell.
The rest crowd round me with an eager look ;
I met them with a sigh, and thus bespoke. 670
Already friends ! you think your toils are o'er,
Your hopes already touch your native shore ;
Alas ! far otherwise the nymph declares,
Ear other journey first demands our cares :
To tread th' uncomfortable paths beneath, 675
The dreary realms of darkness and of death :
To seek 'Tiresias' awful shade below,
And thence our fortunes and our fates to know.

My sad companions heard in deep despair :
Frantic they tore their manly growth of hair ; 680
To earth they fell ; the tears began to rain ;
But tears in mortal miseries are vain.
Sadly they far'd along the sea-beat shore :
Still heav'd their hearts, and still their eyes ran o'er.
The ready victims at our bark we found, 695
The sable ewe, and ram together bound.
For swift as thought, the goddess had been there,
And thence had glided, viewless as the air.
The paths of gods what mortal can survey ?
Who eyes their motion ? who shall trace their way ! 690

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK XI.

The Argument.

The descent into Hell.

ULYSSES continues his narration; how he arrived at the land of the Cimmerians and, what ceremonies he performed to invoke the dead. The manner of his descent, and the apparition of the shades; his conversation with Elpenor and with Tiresias, who informs him in a prophetic manner of his fortunes to come. He meets his mother Anticlea, from whom he learns the state of his family. He sees the shades of the ancient heroines, afterwards of the heroes and converses in particular with Agamemnon and Achilles. Ajax keeps at a sullen distance, and disdains to answer him. He then beholds Tityus, Tantalus, Sisyphus, Hercules; till he is deterred from futher curiosity by the apparition of horrid spectres, and, the cries of the wicked in torments.

NOW to the shores we bend, a mournful train,
Climb the tall bark, and launch into the main :
At once the mast we rear, at once unbind
The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind :
Then pale and pensive stand, with cares opprest, 5
And solemn horror sadens ev'ry breast.
A fresh'ning-breeze the magic pow'r * supply'd,
While the wing'd vessel flow along the tide ;
Our oars we shipp'd : all day the swelling sails
Full from the guiding pilot catch'd the gales. 10
Now sunk the sun from his aerial height,
And o'er the shaded billows rush'd the night :
When lo ! we reach'd old ocean's utmost bounds,
Where rocks control his waves with ever-during mounds.

* Circe

- There in a lonely land, and gloomy cells, 15
The dusky nation of Cimmeria dwells;
The sun ne'er views th' uncomfortable seats,
When radiant he advances, or retreats:
Unhappy race! whom endless night invades,
Clouds the dull air, and wraps them round in shades. 20
The ship we moor on these obscure abodes:
Disbark the sheep, an off'ring to the gods:
And hell-ward bending, o'er the beach descry
The doleful passage to th' infernal sky.
The victims, vow'd to each Tartarean pow'r, 25
Euryloclus and Perimedes bore.
Here open'd hell, all hell I here implor'd,
And from the scabbard drew the shining sword;
And trenching the black earth on ev'ry side,
A cavern form'd, a cubit long and wide. 30
New wine with honey temper'd milk, we bring,
Then living waters from the crystal spring
O'er these was strew'd the consecrated flour,
And on the surface shone the holy store.
Now the wan shades we hail, th' infernal gods, 35
To speed our course, and waft us o'er the floods:
So shall a barren heifer from the stall
Beneath the knife upon your altars fall:
So in our palace, at our safe return
Rich with unnumber'd gifts the pile shall burn; 40
So shall a ram, the largest of the breed,
Black as these regions, to Tiresias bleed.
Thus solemn rites and holy vows we paid
To all the phantom nations of the dead.
Then dy'd the sheep; a purple torrent flow'd 45
And all the caverns smok'd with streaming blood.
When lo! appear'd along the dusky coasts,
Thin, airy shoals of visionary ghosts:
Fair, pensive youths, and soft enamour'd maids;
And wither'd elders, pale and wrinkled shades; 50
Ghastly with wounds the form of warriors slain
Stalk'd with majestic port, a martial train:
These and a thousand more swarm'd o'er the ground,
And all the dire assembly shriek'd around.
Astonish'd at the sight, aghast I stood 55
And a cold fear ran shiv'ring through my blood:

Straight I command the sacrifice to haste
 Straight the flay'd victims to the flames are cast,
 And mutter'd vows, and mystic song apply'd
 To grisly Pluto, and his gloomy bride. 60

Now swift I wav'd my falchion o'er the blood ;
 Back started the pale throngs, and trembling stood,
 Round the black trench the gore untasted flows,
 Till awful from the shades Tiresias rose.

There wand'ring thro' the gloom, I first survey'd, 65
 New to the realms of death, Elpenor's shade ;
 His cold remains all naked to the sky
 On distant shores unwept, unburied lie.
 Sad at the sight I stand, deep fix'd in woe,
 And e'er I spoke the tears began to flow : 70

O say what angry pow'r Elpenor led
 To glide in shades, and wander with the dead ?
 How could thy soul, by realms and seas disjoin'd ;
 Outfly the nimble sail, and leave the lagging wind.

The ghost reply'd ! To hell my dome I owe, 75
 Dæmons accurst, dire ministers of woe !
 My feet thro' wine unfaithful to the weight,
 Betray'd me tumbling from a tow'ry height,
 Staggr'ing I reel'd, and as I reel'd I fell,
 Lux'd the neck joint—my soul descends to hell. 80

But lend me aid, I now conjure thee lend,
 By the soft tie and sacred name of friend !
 By thy fond consort ; by thy father's cares !
 By lov'd Telemachus's blooming years !
 For well I know that soon the heav'nly pow'rs 85
 Will give thee back to day, and Circe's shores :

There pious on my cold remains attend,
 There call to mind thy poor departed friend ;
 The tribute of a tear is all I crave,
 And the possession of a peaceful grave. 90

But if unheard, in vain compassion plead,
 Revere the gods, the gods avenge the dead !
 A tomb along the watry margin raise,
 The tomb with manly arms and trophies grace,
 To shew posterity Elpenor was. 95 }

There high in air, memorial of my name,
 Fix the smooth oar, and bid me live to fame.

To whom with tears: These rites, oh mournful shade!
Due to thy ghost, shall to thy ghost be paid.

Still as I spoke the phantom seem'd to moan, 100
Tear follow'd tear, and groan succeeded groan.
But as my waving sword the blood surrounds.
The shade withdrew, and mutter'd empty sounds.

There as the wond'rous visions I survey'd,
All pale ascends my royal mother's shade: 105
A queen, to Troy she saw our legions pass;
Now a thin form is all Anticlea was!
Struck at the sight, I melt with filial woe,
And down my cheek the pious sorrows flow,
Yet as I shook my falchion o'er the blood, 115
Regardless of her son the parent stood.

When lo! the mighty Theban I behold;
To guide his steps he bore a staff of gold;
Awful he trade! majestic was his look!
And from his holy lips these accents broke. 114

Why, mortal, wand'rest thou from chearful day,
To tread the downward melancholy way?
What angry gods to these dark regions led
Thee, yet alive, companion of the dead?
But sheath thy poinard, while my tongue relates 100
Heav'n's stedfast purpose, and thy future fates.

While yet he spoke, the prophet I obey'd,
And in the scabbar'd plung'd the glitt'ring blade:
Eager he quaff'd the gore, and then exprest
Dark things to come, the counsels of his breast. 125

Weary of light, Ulysses here explores
A prosp'rous voyage to his native shores;
But know—by me unerring fates disclose
New trains of dangers, and new scenes of woes:
I see! I see thy bark by Neptunes tost, 130
For injur'd Cyclops, and his eye-ball lost!
Yet to thy woes the gods decree an end,
If heav'n thou please; and how to please attend;
Where on Trinacrian rocks the ocean roars,
Graze num'rous herds along the verdant shores: 135
Tho' hunger press, yet fly the dang'rous prey,
The herds are sacred to the god of day,
Who all surveys with his extensive eye,
Above, below, on earth and in the sky?

| | | |
|---|-------------------------|------------|
| Book XI. | HOMER'S ODYSSEY. | 167 |
| Rob not the god, and so propitious gales | | 140 |
| Attend thy voyage, and impel thy sails : | | |
| But if his herds ye seize, beneath the waves | | |
| I see thy friends o'erwhelm'd in liquid graves! | | |
| The direful wreck Ulysses scarce survives ! | | |
| Ulysses at his country scarce arrives ! | 145 | |
| Strangers thy guides ! nor there thy labours end, | | |
| New foes arise, domestic ills attend ! | | |
| There foul adult'ers to thy bride resort, | | |
| And lordly gluttons riot in thy court. | | |
| But vengeance hastes amain ! these eyes behold | 150 | |
| The deathful scene, princes on princes roll'd ! | | |
| That done, a people far from sea explore, | | |
| Who ne'er knew salt, or heard the billows roar, | | |
| Or saw gay vessels stem the watry plain, | | |
| A painted wonder flying on the main ! | 155 | |
| Bear on thy back an oar : with strange amaze | | |
| A shepherd meeting thee the oar surveys, | | |
| And names a van : there fix it on the plain, | | |
| To calm the god that holds the watry reign ; | | |
| A threefold off'ring to his altar bring, | 160 | |
| A bull, a ram, a boar ; and hail the ocean king. | | |
| But home return'd, to each ethereal pow'r | | |
| Slay the due victim in the genial hour : | | |
| So peaceful shalt thou end thy blissful days, | | |
| And steal thyself from life by slow decays : | 165 | |
| Unknown to pain, in age resign thy breath, | | |
| When late stern Neptune points the shaft with death : | | |
| To the dark grave retiring as to rest, | | |
| Thy people blessing by thy people blest ! | | |
| Unerring truths, oh man, my lips relate ; | 170 | |
| This is thy life to come, and this is fate. | | |
| To whom, unmov'd : if this the gods prepare ; | | |
| What heav'n ordains, the wise with courage bear. | | |
| But say, why yonder on the lonely strands, | | |
| Unmindful of her son, Anticlea stands ? | 175 | |
| Why to the ground she bends her downcast eye ? | | |
| Why is she silent, while her son is nigh ? | | |
| The latent cause, oh sacred seer, reveal ! | | |
| Nor this, replies the seer, will I conceal. | | |
| Know, to the spectres, that thy bev'rage, taste, | 180 | |
| The scenes of life recur, and actions past ; | | |

They seal'd with truth, return the sure reply;
The rest, repell'd, a train oblivious fly.

The phantom-prophet ceas'd, and sunk from sight
To the black palace of eternal night 185

Still in the dark abodes of death I stood,
When near Anticlea mov'd and drank the blood.
Straight all the mother in her soul awakes,
And, owning her Ulysses, thus she speaks.

Com'st thou, my son, alive, to realms beneath, 190

The dolesome realms of darkness and of death:

Com'st thou alive from pure ethereal day?

Dire is the region, dismal is the way!

Here lakes profound, there floods oppose their waves;

There the wide sea with all her billows raves! 195

Or (since to dust proud Troy submits her tow'rs)

Com'st thou a wand'rer from the Phrygian shores?

Or say, since honour call'd thee to the field,

Hast thou thy Ithaca, thy bride beheld?

Source of my life, I cry'd, from earth I fly 200

To seek Tiresias in the nether sky,

To learn my doom: for, tost from woe to woe,

In ev'ry land Ulysses finds a foe:

Nor have these eyes beheld my native shores,

Since in the dust proud Troy submits her tow'rs. 205

But, when thy soul from her sweet mansion fled,

Say, what distemper gave thee to the dead?

Has life's fair lamp declin'd by slow decays,

Or swift expir'd it in a sudden blaze?

Say, if my sire, good old Lærtēs, lives? 210

If yet Telemachus, my son survives!

Say, by his rule is my dominion aw'd,

Or crush'd by traitors with an iron rod?

Say, if my spouse maintains her royal trust,

Tho' tempted, chaste, and obstinately just? 215

Or if no more her absent lord she wails,

But the false woman o'er the wife prevails?

Thus I, and thus the parent shade returns:

Thee, ever thee, thy faithful comfort mourns:

Whether the night descends, or day prevails, 220

Thee she by night, and thee by day bewails.

Thee in Telemachus thy realm obeys;

In sacred groves celestial rites he pays,

| | | |
|--|------------------|-----|
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| And shares the banquet in superior state, Grac'd with such honours as becomes the great. | | 225 |
| Thy sire in solitude foment's his care : | | |
| The court is joyless, for thou art not there ! | | |
| No costly carpets raise his hoary head, No rich embroid'ry shines to grace his bed : | | |
| Ev'n when keen winter freezes in the skies, | | 230 |
| Rank'd with his slaves, on earth the monarch lies, Deep are his sighs, his visage pale, his dress | | |
| The garb of woe and habit of distress. | | |
| And when the autumn takes his annual round, The leafy honours scatt'ring on the ground ; | | 235 |
| Regardless of his years, abroad he lies, His bed the leaves, his canopy the skies. | | |
| Thus cares on cares his painful days consume, And bow his age with sorrow to the tomb ! | | |
| For thee, my son, I wept my life away ; | | 240 |
| For thee thro' hell's eternal dungeons stray : | | |
| Nor came my fate by ling'ring pains and slow, Nor bent the silver shafted queen her bow ; | | |
| No dire disease bereav'd me of my breath ; | | |
| Thou, thou, my son, wert my disease and death ; | | 245 |
| Unkindly with my love my son conspir'd, For thee I liv'd, for absent thee expir'd. | | |
| Thrice in my arm's I strove her shade to bind, Thrice thro' my arms she slipt like empty wind, Or dreams, the vain illusions of the mind. | | 250 |
| Wild with despair, I shed a copious tide Of flowing tears, and thus with sighs reply'd. | | |
| Fly'st thou, lov'd shade, while I thus fondly mourn ? Turn to my arms, to my embraces turn ! | | |
| Is it, ye pow'rs that smile at human harms ! | | 255 |
| Too great a bliss to weep within her arms ? Or has hell's queen an empty image sent, That wretched I might ev'n my joy lament ? | | |
| O son of woe ! the pensive shade rejoin'd ; Oh most inur'd to grief of all mankind ! | | 260 |
| 'Tis not the queen of hell who thee deceives : All, all are such, when life the body leaves ; No more the substance of the man remains, Nor bounds the blood along the purple veins : | | |

These the funereal flames in atoms bear, 265
To wander with the wind in empty air ;
While the impassive soul reluctant flies,
Like a vain dream, to these infernal skies,
But from the dark dominion speed thy way,
And climb the steep ascent to upper day ; 270
To thy chaste bride the wond'rous story tell,
The woes, the horrors, and the laws of hell.

Thus while she spoke, in swarms hell's empress brings
Daughters and wives of heroes and of kings ;
Thick and more thick they gather round the blood, 275
Ghost throng'd on ghost (a dire assembly) stood !
Dauntless my sword I seize : the airy crew,
Swift, as it flash'd, along the gloom withdrew ;
Then shade to shade in mutual forms succeeds
Her race recounts, and their illustrious deeds. 280

Tyro began : whom great Salmoneus bred ;
The royal partner of fam'd Cretheus' bed.
For fair Enipeus, as from fruitful urns
He pours his watry store, the virgin burns :
Smooth flows the gentle stream with wanton pride, 285
And in soft mazes rolls a silver tide.

As on his banks the maid enamour'd roves,
The monarch of the deep beholds and loves ;
In her Enipeus' form and borrow'd charms
The am'rous god descends into her arms : 290
Around, a spacious arch of waves he throws,
And high in air the liquid mountain rose ;
Thus, in surrounding floods conceal'd, he proves
The pleasing transport, and completes his loves.
'Then softly sighing, he the fair address, 295
And as he spoke her tender hand he prest.

Hail, happy nymph ! no vulgar births are ow'd
To the prolific raptures of a god :
Lo ! when nine times the moon renews her horn,
Two brother heroes shall from thee be born ; 300
Thy early care the future worthies claim,
'To point them to the arduous paths of fame ;
But in thy breast th' important truth conceal,
Nor dare the secret of a god reveal :
For know, thou Neptune view'st ! and at my nod 305
Earth trembles, and the waves confess their god.

He added not, but mounting spurn'd the plain,
Then plung'd into the chambers of the main.

Now in the time's full process forth she brings
Jove's dread vicegerents, in two future kings; 310
O'er proud Iolcos Pelias stretch'd his reign,
And godlike Neleus rul'd the Pylian plain:
'Then, fruitful, to her Crethus' royal bed
She gallant Pheres and fam'd Æson bred;
From the same fountain Amythaon rose, 315
Pleas'd with the din of war, and noble shout of foes.

There mov'd Antiope with baughty charms,
Who blest th' almighty thund'rer in her arms:
Hence sprung Amphion, hence brave Zethus came,
Founders of Thebes, and men of mighty name; 320
Tho' bold in open field, they yet surround
The town with walls, and mound inject on mound;
Here ramparts stood, there tow'rs rose high in air,
And therè thro' seven wide portals rush'd the war.

There with soft step the fair Alcmena trod, 325
Who bore Alcides to the thund'ring god;
And Megara, who charm'd the son of Jove,
And soften'd his stern soul to tender love.

Sullen and sour, with discontented mein,
Jocasta frown'd, th' incestuous Theban queen! 330
With her own son she join'd in nuptial bands,
Tho' father's blood imbru'd his murd'rous hands;
The gods and men the dire offence detest,
The gods with all their furies rend their breast:
In lofty Thebes he wore th' imperial crown, 335
A pompous wretch! accurs'd upon a throne.
The wife self-murder'd, from a beam depends,
And her foul soul to blackest hell descends;
Thence to her son the choicest plagues she brings,
And the fiends hunt him with a thousand stings. 340

And now the beauteous Chloris I descry,
A lovely shade, Amphion's youngest joy!
With gifts unnumber'd Neleus sought her arms;
Nor paid too dearly for unequal'd charms:
Great in Orchomenos, in Pylos great, 345
He sway'd the sceptre with imperial state.
Three gallant sons the joyful monarch told,
Sage Nestor, Periclimenus the bold,

And Cromius last ; but of the softer race,
 One nymph alone, a miracle of grace. 350
 Kings on their thrones for lovely Pero burn,
 The sire denies, and kings rejected mourn.
 To him alone the beauteous prize he yields,
 Whose arm should ravish from Phylacian fields
 The herds of Iphyclus, detain'd in wrong, 355
 Wild, furious herds, unconquerably strong !
 This dares a seer, but nought the seer prevails,
 In beauty's cause illustriously he fails.
 Twelve moons the foe the captive youth detains
 In painful dungeons and coercive chains ; 360
 'The foe at last, from durance where he lay,
 His art revering, gave him back to day ;
 Won by prophetic knowledge, to fulfil
 The stedfast purpose of th' almighty will.
 With graceful port advancing, now I spy'd 365
 Leda the fair, the godlike Tyndar's bride :
 Hence Pollux sprung, who wields with furious sway
 The deathful gauntlets, matchless in the fray :
 And Castor, glorious on th' embattel'd plain,
 Curbs the proud steed, reluctant to the rein 370
 By turns they visit this ethereal sky ;
 And live alternate, and alternate die ;
 In hell beneath, on earth, in heav'n above,
 Reign the twin gods, the fav'rite sons of Jove.
 There Ephimedia trod the gloomy plain, 375
 Who charm'd the monarch of the boundless main :
 Hence Ephialtes, hence stern Otus sprung,
 More fierce than giants, more than giants strong ;
 The earth o'erburden'd groan'd beneath their weight,
 None but Orion e'er surpass'd their height : 380
 The wond'rous youths had scarce nine winters told,
 When high in air, tremendous to behold,
 Nine ells aloft they rear'd their tow'ring head,
 And full nine cubits broad their shoulders spread.
 Proud of their strength, and more than mortal size,
 The gods they challenge, and affect the skies ; 386
 Heav'd on Olympus tott'ring Ossia stood,
 On Ossia Pelion nods with all his wood :
 Such were the youths ! had they to manhood grown,
 Almighty Jove had trembled on this throne 390

But ere the harvest of the beard began
To bristle on the chin, and promise man,
His shafts Apollo aim'd: at once they found
And stretch the giant-monsters o'er the ground.

There mournful Phædra with sad Procris moves,
Both beauteous shades, both hapless in their loves: 396
And near them walk'd, with solemn pace and slow,
Sad Ariadne partner of their woe;

The royal Minos Ariadne bred,
She Theseus lov'd; from Crete with Theseus fled: 400
Swift to the Dian isle the hero flies,
And tow'rd's his Athens bears the lovely prize;
There Bacchus with fierce rage Diana fires,
The goddess aims her shaft, the nymph expires.

There Clymene and Mera I behold, 405 }
There Eriphyle weeps, who loosely sold
Her lord, her honour, for the lust of gold.
But should I all recount, the night would fail,
Unequal to the melancholy tale:

And all-composing rest my nature craves, 410
Here in the court, or yonder on the waves:
In you I trust, and in the heav'nly pow'rs,
'To land Ulysses on his native shores.

He ceas'd: but left so charming on their ear
His voice, that list'ning still they seem'd to hear. 415
Till, rising up, Arete silence broke,
Stretch'd out her snowy hand, and thus she spoke:

What wond'rous man heav'n sends us in our guest!
Thro' all his woes the hero shines confest:
His comely port, his ample frame, express 420
A manly air, majestic in distress.

He, as my guest, is my peculiar care,
You share the pleasure—then in bounty share;
To worth in misery a rev'rence pay,
And with a gen'rous hand reward his stay; 425
For since kind heav'n with wealth our realm has blest,
Give it to heav'n, by aiding the distress.

Then sage Echeneus, whose grave rev'rend brow
The hand of time had silver'd o'er with snow,
Mature in wisdom rose: Your words, he cries, 430
Demand obedience, for your words are wise.

But let our king direct the glorious way
To gen'rous acts : our part is to obey.

While life informs these limbs, (the king reply'd,)
Well to deserve be all my cares employ'd : 435
But here this night the royal guest detain,
'Till the sun flames along th' etherial plain :
Be it my task to send with ample stores
The stranger from our hospitable shores :
'Tread you my steps ! 'tis mine to lead the race, 440
The first in glory, as the first in place.

To whom the prince : This night with joy I stay,
O monarch great in virtue as in sway !
If thou the circling year my stay controul,
To raise a bounty noble as thy soul : 445
The circling year I wait, with ampler stores
And fitter pomp to hail my native shores :
Then by my realms due homage would be paid,
For wealthy kings are loyally obeyed !

O king ! for such thou art, and sure thy blood 450
Thro' veins, (he cry'd) of royal fathers flow'd ;
Unlike those vagrants who on falsehood live,
Skill'd in smooth tales, and artful to deceive ;
'Thy better soul abhors the liar's part,
Wise is thy voice, and noble is thy heart. 455
Thy words like music ev'ry breast control,
Steal thro' the ear and win upon the soul ;
Soft, as some song divine, thy story flows,
No better could the muse record thy woes.

But say, upon the dark and dismal coast, 460
Saw'st thou the worthies of the Grecian host ?
The godlike leaders who, in battle slain,
Fell before Troy, and nobly prest the plain ?
And lo ! a length of night behind remains,
The ev'ning stars still mount th' etherial plains. 465
Thy tale with raptures I could hear thee tell,
Thy woes on earth, the wond'rous scenes in hell,
Till in the vault of heav'n the stars decay,
And the sky reddens with the rising day.

O worthy of the pow'r the gods assign'd, 470
(Ulysses thus replies,) a king in mind !
Since yet the early hour of night allows
Time for discourse, and time for soft repose,

If scenes of misery can entertain,
 Woes I unfold, of woes a dismal train. 475
 Prepare to hear of murder and of blood ;
 Of godlike heroes, who uninjur'd stood
 Amidst a war of spears in foreign lands,
 Yet bled at home, and bled by female hands.
 Now summon'd Proserpine to hell's black hall 480
 The heroine shades ; they vanish'd at her call :
 When lo : advanc'd the forms of heroes slain
 By stern Ægysthus, a majestic train, }
 And, high above the rest, Atrides prest the plain.
 He quaff'd the gore : and straight his soldier knew,
 And from his eyes pour'd down the tender dew ; 486
 His arms he stretch'd ; his arms the touch deceive,
 Nor in the fond embrace, embraces give :
 His substance vanish'd, and his strength decay'd,
 Now all Atrides is an empty shade. 490
 Mov'd at the sight, I for a space resign'd
 To soft affliction all my manly mind :
 At last with tears—O what relentless doom,
 Imperial phantom, bow'd thee to the tomb ?
 Say, while the sea, and while the tempest raves, 495
 Has fate oppress'd thee in the roaring waves ;
 Or nobly seiz'd thee in the dire alarms
 Of war and slaughter, and the clash of arms ?
 The ghost returns: O chief of human kind
 For active courage and a patient mind ; 500
 Nor while the sea, nor while the tempest raves,
 Has fate oppress'd me on the roaring waves !
 Nor nobly seiz'd me in the dire alarms
 Of war and slaughter, and the clash of arms.
 Stabb'd by a murd'rous hand Atrides dy'd, 505
 A foul adult'rer and a faithless bride ;
 Ev'n in my mirth and at the friendly feast,
 O'er the full bowl the traitor stab'd his guest ;
 Thus by the gory arm of slaughter falls
 The stately ox, and bleeds within the stalls. 510
 But not with me the direful murder ends,
 These, these expir'd ! their crime, they were my friends:
 Thick as the boars, which some luxurious lord
 Kills for the feast, to crown the nuptial board.

When war has thunder'd with its loudest storms, 515
Death thou hast seen in all her ghastly forms ;
In duel met her, on the listed ground,
When hand to hand they wound return for wound ;
But never have thy eyes astonish'd view'd
So vile a deed, so dire a scene of blood. 520
Ev'n in the flow of joy, when now the bowl
Glows in our veins, and opens ev'ry soul,
We groan, we faint : with blood the doom is dy'd,
And o'er the pavement floats the dreadful tide.—
Her breast all gore, with lamentable cries, 525
The bleeding innocent Cassandra dies !
Then, tho' pale death froze cold in ev'ry vein,
My sword I strive to wield, but strive in vain ;
Nor did my traitress wife these eye-lids close,
Or decently in death my limbs compose. 530
O woman, woman, when to ill thy mind
Is bent, all hell contains no fouler fiend :
And such was mine ! who basely plung'd her sword
Thro' the fond bosom where she reign'd ador'd !
Alas ! I hop'd the toils of war o'ercome, 535
To meet soft quiet and repose at home ;
Delusive hope ! O wife, thy deeds disgrace
The perjur'd sex, and blacken all the race ;
And should posterity one virtuous find,
Name Clytemnestra, they will curse the kind. 540
O injur'd shade, I cry'd, what mighty woes
'To thy imperial race from woman rose !
By woman here thou tread'st this mournful strand,
And Greece by woman lies a desert land.
Warn'd by my ills beware, the shade replies, 545
Nor trust the sex that is so rarely wise ;
When earnest to explore thy secret breast,
Unfold some trifle, but conceal the rest.
But in thy comfort cease to fear a foe,
For thee she feels sincerity of woe : 550
When Troy first bled beneath the Grecian arms,
She shone unrivall'd with a blaze of charms,
Thy infant son her fragrant bosom prest,
Hung at her knee, or wanton'd at her breast ;
But now the years a num'rous train have ran ; 555
The blooming boy is ripen'd into man ;

Thy eyes shall see him burn with noble fire,
The sire shall bless his son, the son his sire :
But my Orestes never met these eyes,
Without one look the murder'd father dies : 560
Then from a wretched friend this wisdom learn,
Ev'n to thy queen disguis'd, unknown, return ;
For since of woman kind so few are just,
'Think all are false, nor ev'n the faithful trust.

But say resides my son in royal port, 565
In rich Orchomenos, or Sparta's court ?
Or say in Pyle † for yet he views the light,
Nor glides a phantom through the realms of night.

'Then I : Thy suit is vain, nor can I say
If yet he breathes in realms of cheerful day ; 570
Or pale or wan behold these nether skies,
'Truth I revere ; for wisdom never lies.

'Thus in a tide of tears our sorrows flow,
And add new horror to the realms of woe ;
Till side by side along the dreary coast 575
Advanc'd Achilles' and Patroclus' ghost,
A friendly pair ! near these the Pylian * stray'd,
And tow'ring Ajax, an illustrious shade ?
War was his joy, and pleas'd with loud alarms,
None but Pehdes brighter shone in arms. 580

'Thro' the thick gloom his friend Achilles knew,
And as he speaks the tears descend in dew.

Com'st thou alive to view the Stygian bounds,
Where the wan spectres walk eternal rounds ;
Nor fear'st the dark and dismal waste to trade, 585
'Throng'd with pale ghosts, familiar with the dead ?

To whom with sighs : I pass the dreadful gates
To seek the Thebans, and consult the fates :
For still distress ; I rove from coast to coast,
Lost to my friends, and to my country lost. 590
But sure the eye of time beholds no name
So blest as thine in all the rolls of fame :

Alive we hail'd thee with our guardian gods,
And dead thou rul'st a king in these abodes.

Talk not of ruling in this dol'rous gloom, 595
Nor think vain words (he cry'd) can ease my doom.
Rather I chuse laboriously to bear
A weight of woes, and breathe the vital air,

* Antilochus.

A slave to some poor hind who toils for bread,
 Than reign the scepter'd monarch of the dead. 600
 But say, if in my steps my son proceeds,
 And emulates his godlike father's deeds?
 If at the clash of arms, and shout of foes,
 Swells his bold heart, his bosom nobly glows?
 Say, if my sire, the rev'rend Peleus reigns 605
 Great in his Pthia, and his throne maintains;
 Or weak and old, my youthful arm demands,
 To fix the sceptre steadfast in his hands?
 O might the lamp of life rekindled burn,
 And death release me from the silent urn! 610
 This arm that thunder'd o'er the Phrygian plain,
 And swell'd the ground with mountains of the slain,
 Should vindicate my injur'd father's fame,
 Crush the proud rebel, and assert his claim.
 Illustrious shade, (I cry'd,) of Peleus' fates 615
 No circumstance the voice of fame relates:
 But hear with pleas'd attention the renown,
 The wars and wisdom of thy gallant son:
 With me from Scyros to the field of fame
 Radiant in arms the blooming hero came; 620
 When Greece assembled all her hundred states
 To ripen councils and decide debates;
 Heav'ns! how he charm'd us with a flow of sense,
 And won the heart with manly eloquence!
 He first was seen of all the peers to rise, 625
 The third in wisdom where they all were wise:
 But when to try the fortune of the day,
 Host mov'd tow'rd host in terrible array,
 Before the van, impatient for the fight,
 With martial port he strode, and stern delight; 630
 Heaps strew'd on heaps beneath his faulchion groan'd,
 And monuments of dead deform'd the ground.
 The time would fail should I in order tell
 What foes were vanquish'd, and what numbers fell:
 How, lost thro' love, Eurypylus was slain. 635
 And round him bled his bold Ceteæan train.
 To Troy no hero came of nobler line,
 Or if of nobler, Memnon, it was thine.
 When Ilion in the horse receiv'd her doom,
 And unseen armies ambush'd in its womb; 640

Greece gave her latent warriors to my care,
 'Twas mine on 'Troy to pour th' imprison'd war:
 Then when the boldest bosom beat with fear,
 When the stern eyes of heroes dropp'd a tear;
 Fierce in his look his ardent valour glow'd, 645
 Flush'd in his cheek, or sally'd in his blood;
 Indignant in the dark recess he stands,
 Pants for the battle, and the war demands;
 His voice breath'd death, and with a martial air
 He grasp'd his sword, and shook his glit'ring spear. 650
 And when the gods our arms with conquest crown'd,
 When 'Troy's proud bulwarks smok'd upon the ground
 Greece to reward her soldier's gallant toils,
 Heap'd high his navy with unnumber'd spoils.

Thus great in glory from the din of war 655
 Safe he return'd, without one hostile scar;
 Tho' spears in iron tempests rain'd around,
 Yet innocent they play'd, and guiltless of a wound.

While yet I spoke, the shade with transport glow'd,
 Rose in his majesty, and nobler trod; 660
 With haughty stalk he sought the distant glades
 Of warrior kings, and join'd th' illustrious shades.

Now without number ghost by ghost arose,
 All wailing with unutterable woes.
 Alone, apart, in discontented mood 665
 A gloomy shade, the sullen Ajax stood;
 For ever sad with proud disdain he pin'd,
 And the lost arms for ever stung his mind;
 Tho' to the contest 'Thetis gave the law,
 And Pallas, by the 'Trojans, judg'd the cause. 670
 O why was I victorious in the strife;
 O dear-bought honour with so brave a life!
 With him the strength of war, the soldiers pride,
 Our second hope to great Achilles dy'd!
 Touch'd at the sight from tears I scarce refrain, 675
 And tender sorrow thrills in ev'ry vein;
 Pensive and sad I stand, at length accost,
 With accent mild, th' inexorable ghost.

Still burns thy rage? and can brave souls resent
 Ev'n after death? Relent, great shade, relent! 680
 Perish those arms which by the gods decree
 Accurs'd our army with the loss of thee!

With thee we fell : Greece wept thy hapless fates ;
And shook astonish'd thro' her hundred states ;
Not more, when great Achilles prest the ground, 685
And breath'd his manly spirit thro' the wound.

O deem thy fall not ow'd to man's decree,
Jove hated Greece, and punish'd Greece in thee !
Turn then, oh peaceful turn, thy wrath control,
And calm the raging tempest of thy soul. 690

While yet I speak, the shade disdains to stay,
In silence turns, and sullen stalks away.

Touch'd at his sour retreat, thro' deepest night,
Thro' hell's black bounds I had pursu'd his flight,
And forc'd the stubborn spectre to reply ; 695

But wond'rous visions drew my curious eye
High on a throne, tremendous to behold,
Stern Minos waves a mace of burnish'd gold ;
Around ten thousand thousand spectres stand
Thro' the wide dome of Dis, a trembling band. 700
Still as they plead, the fatal lots he rolls,
Absolves the just, and dooms the guilty souls.

There huge Orion, of portentous size,
Swift thro' the gloom a giant-hunter flies ;
A pond'rous mace of brass with direful sway 705
Aloft he whirls, to crush the savage prey ;
Stern beasts in trains that by his trunchion-fell,
Now grisly forms, shoot o'er the lawns of hell.

There Tityus large and long, in fetters bound,
O'erspreads nine acres of infernal ground ; 710
Two rav'nous vultures, furious for their food,
Scream o'er the fiend, and riot in his blood,
Incessant gore the liver in his breast,
Th' immortal liver grows, and gives th' immortal feast.
Far as o'er Panope's enamell'd plains, 715

Latona journey'd to the Pythian fanes,
With haughty love th' audacious monster strove
To force the goddess, and to rival Jove.

There Tantalus along the Stygian bounds
Pours out deep groans, (with groans all hell resounds) ;
Ev'n in the circling floods refreshment craves, 721
And pines with thirst amidst a sea of waves :
When to the water he his lip applies,
Back from his lip the treach'rous water flies.

Above, beneath, around his hapless head
Trees of all kinds delicious fruitage spread ;
There figs, sky dy'd, a purple hue disclose,
Green looks the olive, the pom'granate glows,
There dangling pears exalted scents unfold,
And yellow apples ripen into gold ;
The fruit he strives to seize : but blasts arise,
Toss it on high, and whirl it to the skies.

725

730

I turn'd my eye, and as I turn'd survey'd
A mournful vision ! the Sisypbian shade ;
With many a weary step, and many a groan,
Up a high hill he heaves a huge round stone ;
The huge round stone, resulting with a bound,
Thunders impetuous down, and smokes along the ground.
Again the restless orb his toil renews,
Dust mounts in clouds, and sweat descends in dew.

735

740

Now I the strength of Hercules behold,
A tow'ring spectre of gigantic mould,
A shadowy form ! for high in heav'n's abodes
Himself resides, a god among the gods ;
There, in the bright assemblies of the skies,
He nectar quaffs, and Hebe crowns his joys,
Here hov'ring ghosts, like fowl, his shade surround,
And clang their pinions with terrific sound ;
Gloomy as night he stands, in act to throw
Th' aerial arrow from the twanging bow.

745

750

Around his breast a wond'rous zone is roll'd,
Where woodland monsters grin in fretted gold ;
There sullen lions sternly seem to roar,
The bear to growl, to foam the tusky boar ;
There war, and havoc, and destruction stood,
And vengeful murder, red with human blood.
Thus terribly adorn'd, the figures shine,
Inimitably wrought with skill divine.
The mighty ghost advanc'd with awful look,
And turning his grim visage, sternly spoke.

755

760

O exercis'd in grief ! by arts refin'd !
O taught to bear the wrongs of base mankind !
Such, such was I ! still tost from care to care,
While in your world I drew the vital air !
Ev'n I, who from the Lord of thunders rose,
Bore toils and dangers, and a weight of woes ;

765

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK XII.

The Argument.

The Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis.

HE relates how, after his return from the shades, he was sent by Circe on his voyage, by the coast of the Sirens, and by the streight of Scylla and Charybdis: the manner in which he escaped those dangers: how being cast on the island 'Trinacria, his companions destroyed the oxen of the sun: the vengeance that followed; how all perished by shipwreck except himself, who swimming on the mast of the ship, arrived on the island of Calypso. With which his narrations concludes.

THUS o'er the rolling surge the vessel flies,
Till from the waves the *Ææan* hills arise.
Here the gay morn resides in radiant bow'rs,
Here keeps her revels with the dancing hours,
Here Phœbus, rising in th' ethereal way, 5
'Thro' heav'n's bright portals pours the beamy day.
At once we fix our halsers on the land,
At once descend, and press the desert sand;
There, worn and wasted, lose our cares in sleep,
To the hoarse murmurs of the rolling deep. 10
Soon as the morn restor'd the day, we pay'd
Sepulchral honours to Eipenor's shade.
Now by the axe the rushing forest bends,
And the huge pile along the shore ascends.
Around we stand, a melancholy train, 15
And a loud groan re-echoes from the main.

The ground polluted floats with human gore,
And human carnage taints the dreadful shore. 60
Fly swift the dang'rous coast; let ev'ry ear
Be stopp'd against the song? 'tis death to hear!
Firm to the mast with chains thyself be bound,
Nor trust thy virtue to th' enchanting sound.
If, mad with transport, freedom thou demand, 95
Be ev'ry fetter strain'd, and added band to band.

These seas o'erpass'd, be wise! but I refrain
To mark distinct thy voyage o'er the main:
New horrors rise! let prudence be thy guide,
And guard thy various passage thro' the tide. 70

High o'er the main two rocks exalt their brow,
The boiling billows thund'ring roll below;
Thro' the vast waves the dreadful wonders move,
Hence nam'd Erratic by the gods above.
No bird of air, no dove of swiftest wing, 75
That bears ambrosia to th' etherial king,
Shuns the dire rocks; in vain she cuts the skies,
The dire rocks meet, and crush her as she flies;
Not the fleet bark, when prosp'rous breezes play,
Ploughs o'er that roaring surge its desp'rate way: 80
O'erwhelm'd it sinks: while round a smoke expires,
And the waves flashing seem to burn with fires.
Scarce the fam'd Argo pass'd these raging floods
The sacred Argö, fill'd with demigods!
Ev'n she had sunk, but Jove's imperial bride 85
Wing'd her fleet sail, and push'd her o'er the tide.

High in the air the rock its summit shrouds,
In brooking tempests, and in rolling clouds
Loud storms around and mists eternal rise
Beat its bleak brow, and intercept the skies. 90
When all the broad expansion, bright with day,
Glow with th' autumnal or the summer ray,
The summer and the autumn glow in vain,
The sky for ever low'rs, for ever clouds remain.
Impervious to the step of man it stands, 95
Tho' borne by twenty feet, tho' arm'd with twenty hands;
Smooth as the polish of the mirror rise
The slippery sides, and shoot into the skies.
Full in the centre of this rock display'd.
A yawning cavern casts a dreadful shade: 100

Nor the fleet arrow from the twanging bow,
 Sent with fell force, could reach the depth below.
 Wide to the west the horrid gulf extends,
 And the dire passage down to hell descends.
 O fly the dreadful sight! expand thy sails, 105
 Ply the strong oar, and catch the nimble gales;
 Here Scylla bellows from her dire abodes,
 Tremendous pest! abhorr'd by man and gods!
 Hideous her voice, and with less terrors roar
 The whelps of lions in the midnight hour. 110
 Twelve feet deform'd and foul the fiend dispreads;
 Six horrid necks she rears, and six terrific heads:
 Her jaws grin dreadful with three rows of teeth;
 Jaggy they stand, the gaping den of death;
 Her parts obscene the raging billows hide; 115
 Her bosom terribly o'erlooks the tide.
 When stung with hunger she embroils the flood,
 The sea-dog and the dolphin are her food;
 She makes the huge leviathan her prey,
 And all the monsters of the watry way; 120
 'The swiftest racer of the azure plain
 Here fills her sails and spreads her oars in vain;
 Fell Scylla rises, in her fury roars,
 At once six mouths expands, at once six men devours.
 Close by, a rock of less enormous height 125
 Breaks the wild waves, and forms a dang'rous streight;
 Full on its crown a fig's green branches rise,
 And shoot a leafy forest to the skies;
 Beneath, Charybdis holds her boist'rous reign
 'Midst roaring whirlpools, and absorbs the main; 130
 Thrice in her gulfs the boiling seas subside,
 Thrice in dire thunders she refunds the tide.
 Oh if thy vessel plough the direful waves,
 When seas retreating roar within her caves,
 Ye perish all! tho' he who rules the main 135
 Lend his strong aid, his aid he lends in vain.
 Ah shun the horrid gulf? by Scylla fly,
 'Tis better six to lose, than all to die.
 I then: O nymph propitious to my pray'r
 Goddess divine, my guardian pow'r declare, 140
 Is the foul fiend from human vengeance freed?
 Or if I rise in arms; can Scylla bleed?

Then she : O worn by toils, oh broke in fight !
 Still are new toils and war thy dire delight ;
 Will martial flames for ever fire thy mind, 145
 And never, never be to heav'n resign'd ?
 How vain thy efforts to avenge the wrong ?
 Deathless the pest ! impenetrably strong !
 Furious and fell, tremendous to behold !
 Ev'n with a look she withers all the bold ! 150
 She mocks the weak attempts of human might ;
 O fly her rage ! thy conquest is thy flight.
 If but to seize thy arms thou make delay,
 Again the fury vindicates her prey,
 Her six mouths yawn, and six are snatch'd away. }
 From her foul womb Crataeis gave to air 155
 'This dreadful pest ! 'To her direct thy pray'r,
 To curb the monster in her dire abodes,
 And guard thee thro' the tumult of the floods.
 Thence to Trinacria's shore you bend your way, 160
 Where graze thy herds, illustrious source of day !
 Sev'n herds, sev'n flocks enrich the sacred plains,
 Each herd, each flock, full fifty heads contains ;
 The wond'rous kind a length of age survey,
 By breed increase not, nor by death decay. 165
 Two sister goddesses possess the plain,
 The constant guardians of the woolly train ;
 Lampetie fair, and Phæthusa young,
 From Phœbus and the bright Neæra sprung :
 Here watchful o'er the flocks, in shady bow'rs, 170
 And flow'ry meads they waste the joyous hours.
 Rob not the god ! and so propitious gales
 Attend thy voyage, and impel thy sails ;
 But if thy impious hands the flocks destroy,
 The gods, the gods avenge it, and ye die ! 175
 'Tis thine alone (thy friends and navy lost)
 Thro' tedious toils to view thy native coast.
 She ceas'd : and now arose the morning ray :
 Swift to her dome the goddess held her way.
 Then to my mates I measur'd back the plain, 180
 Climb'd the tall bark, and rush'd into the main ;
 Then bending to the stroke, their oars they drew
 To their broad breasts, and swift the galley flew.

Up spring a brisker breeze ; with freshning gales
 The friendly goddess stretch'd the swelling sails ; 185
 We drop our oars ; at ease the pilot guides ;
 The vessel light along the level glides.
 When rising sad and slow, with pensive look,
 Thus to the melancholy train I spoke :

O friends, oh ever partners of my woes, 190
 Attend, while I what heav'n foredooms disclose,
 Hear all ! Fate hangs o'er all ! on you it lies
 To live, or perish ! to be safe, be wise !

In flow'ry meads the sportive Sirens play, 195
 Touch the soft lyre, and tune the vocal lay ;
 Me, me alone, with fetters firmly bound
 The gods allow to hear the dang'rous sound.
 Hear and obey : if freedom I demand,
 Be ev'ry fetter strain'd, he added band to band.

While yet I speak the winged galley flies, 200
 And lo ! the Siren shores like mists arise.

Sunk were at once the winds ; the air above,
 And waves below, at once forget to move !
 Some dæmon calm'd the air, and smooth'd the deep,
 Hush'd the loud winds, and charm'd the waves to sleep. 206

Now ev'ry sail we furl, each oar we ply ;
 Lash'd by the stroke the frothy waters fly.
 The ductile wax with busy hands I mould,
 And cleft in fragments, and the fragments roll'd ;
 Th' ærial region now grew warm with day, 210
 The wax dissolv'd beneath the burning ray ;
 Then ev'ry ear I barr'd against the strain,
 And from excess of phrenzy lock'd the brain.
 Now round the mast my mates the fetters roll'd ;
 And bound me limb by limb, with fold on fold. 215
 Then, bending to the stroke, the active train
 Plunge all at once their oars, and cleave the main.

While to the shore the rapid vessel flies,
 Our swift approach the Siren quire describes ;
 Celestial music warbles from their tongue, 220
 And thus the sweet deluders tune the song.

O stay, oh pride of Greece ! Ulysses stay !
 O cease thy course, and listen to our lay !
 Blest is the man ordain'd our voice to hear,
 The song instructs the soul, and charms the ear. 225

Approach ! thy soul shall into rapture rise !
Approach ! and learn new wisdom from the wise !
We know whate'er the kings of mighty name
Atchiev'd at Ilion in the field of fame ;
Whate'er beneath the sun's bright journey lies. 230
O stay, and learn new wisdom from the wise !

Thus the sweet charmers warbled o'er the main ;
My soul takes wing to meet the heav'nly strain ;
I give the sign, and struggle to be free :
Swift row my mates, and shoot along the sea ; 235
New chains they add, and rapid urge the way,
Till dying off the distant sounds decay :
Then scudding swiftly from the dang'rous ground,
The deafen'd ear unlock'd, the chains unbound.

Now all at once tremendous scenes unfold ; 240
Thunder'd the deeps, the smoking billows roll'd !
Tumultuous waves embroil'd the bellowing flood,
All trembling, deafen'd, and aghast we stood !
No more the vessel plough'd the dreadful wave,
Fear seiz'd the mighty, and unnerv'd the brave 245
Each dropp'd his oar : but swift from man to man
With look serene I turn'd, and thus began.
Of friends ! oh often try'd in adverse storms !
With ills familiar in more dreadful forms !
Deep in the dire Cyclopean den you lay, 250
Yet safe return'd—Ulysses led the way.

Learn courage hence ! and in my care confide :
Lo ! still the same Ulysses is your guide !
Attend my words ! your oars incessant ply ;
Strain ev'ry nerve, and bid the vessel fly. 255

If from yon justling rocks and wayward
Jove safety grants ; he grants it to your care.
And thou whose guiding hand directs our way,
Pilot, attentive listen and obey !
Bear wide thy course, nor plough those angry waves,
Where rolls yon smoke, yon tumbling ocean raves ; 261
Steer by the higher rock ; lest whirl'd around
We sink, beneath the circling eddy drown'd.
While yet I speak, at once their oars they seize,
Stretch to the stroke, and brush the working seas. 265
Cautious the name of Scylla I suppress :
That dreadful sound had chill'd the boldest breast

Mean time, forgetful of the voice divine,
All dreadful bright my limbs in armour shine ;
High on the deck I take my dang'rous stand, 270
Two glitt'ring jav'lines lighten in my hand ;
Prepar'd to whirl the whizzing spear I stay,
Till the fell fiend arise to seize her prey.
Around the dungeon, studious to behold
The hideous pest, my lab'ring eyes I roll'd ; 275
In vain : the dismal dungeon dark as night
Veils the dire monster, and confounds the sight.

Now thro' the rocks, appal'd with deep dismay,
We bend our course, and stem the desp'rate way ;
Dire Scylla there a scene of horror forms, 280
And here Charybdis fills the deep with storms.
When the tide rushes from her rumbling caves
The rough rocks roar ; tumultuous boil the waves ;
They toss, they foam, a wild confusion raise,
Like waters bubbling o'er the fiery blaze : 285
Eternal mists obscure th' ærial plain,
And high above the rock she spouts the main ;
When in her gulfs the rushing sea subsides,
She drains the ocean with the reflux tides :
The rock rebellows with a thund'ring sound ; 290
Deep, wond'rous deep, below appears the ground.

Struck with despair, with trembling hearts we view'd
The yawning dungeon, and the tumbling flood ;
When lo ! fierce Scylla stoop'd to seize her prey,
Stretch'd her dire jaws, and swept six men away ; 295
Chiefs of renown ! Loud echoing shrieks arise ;
I turn and view them quiv'ring in the skies ;
They call, and aid with out-stretch'd arms implore :
In vain they call ! those arms are stretch'd no more.
As from some rock that overhangs the flood, 300
The silent fisher casts th' insidious food,
With fraudulent care he waits the finny prize,
And sudden lifts it quiv'ring to the skies :
So the foul monster lifts her prey on high,
So pant the wretches struggling in the sky ; 305
In the wide dungeon she devours her food,
And the flesh trembles while she churns the blood.
Worn as I am with griefs, with care decay'd,
Never, I never scene so dire survey'd !

| | | |
|---|------------------|-----|
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| My shiv'ring blood, congeal'd, forgot to flow ; | | 310 |
| Aghast I stood, a monument of woe ! | | |
| Now from the rocks the rapid vessel flies, | | |
| And the hoarse din like distant thunder dies ; | | |
| To Sol's bright isle our voyage we pursue, | | |
| And now the glitt'ring mountains rise to view. | 315 | |
| There, sacred to the radiant god of day, | | |
| Graze the fair herds the flocks promiscuous stray ; | | |
| Then suddenly was heard along the main | | |
| To low the ox, to bleat the wooly train ; | | |
| Streight to my anxious thoughts the sound convey'd | | |
| The words of Circe and the Theban shade ; | 321 | |
| Warn'd by these awful voice their shores to shun, | | |
| With cautious fears oppress'd, I thus begun. | | |
| O friends ! oh ever exercis'd in care ! | | |
| Hear heav'n's command, and rev'rence what ye hear ! | | |
| To fly these shores the prescient Theban shade | 326 | |
| And Circe warns ! O be their voice obey'd : | | |
| Some mighty woe relentless heav'n forebodes : | | |
| Fly the dire regions, and revere the gods ! | | |
| While yet I spoke, a sudden sorrow ran | 330 | } |
| Thro' ev'ry breast, and spread from man to man, | | |
| Till wrathful thus Eurylochus thus began. | | |
| O cruel thou ! some fury sure has steel'd | | |
| That stubborn soul, by toil untaught to yield ! | | |
| From sleep debarr'd, we sink from woes to woes ; | 533 | |
| And, cruel, civies thou a short repose ? | | |
| Still must we restless rove new seas explore, | | |
| The sun descending and so near the shore ? | | |
| And lo ! the night begins her gloomy reign, | | |
| And doubles all the terrors of the main. | 340 | |
| Oft in the dead of night loud winds arise, | | |
| Lash the wild surge and bluster in the skies ; | | |
| Oh should the fierce south-west his rage display | | |
| And toss with rising storms the watry way, | | |
| Tho' gods descend from heav'n's ærial plain | 345 | |
| To lend us aid the gods descend in vain : | | |
| Then while the night displays her awful shade, | | |
| Sweet time of slumber ! be the night obey'd ! | | |
| Haste ye to land ; and when the morning ray | | |
| Shades her bright beams, pursue the destin'd way. | 350 | |

A sudden joy in ev'ry bosom rose :
So will'd some dæmon, minister of woes !

To whom with grief — O swift to be undone,
Constrain'd I act what wisdom bids me shun.
But yonder herds and yonder flocks forbear ; 355
Attest the heav'ns, and calls the gods to hear :
Content, an innocent repast display,
By Circe giv'n, and fly the dang'rous play.

Thus I : and while to shore the vessel flies,
With hands uplifted they attest the skies : 360
'Then where a fountain's gurgling waters play,
'They rush to land, and end in feasts the day :
'They feed, they quaff ; and now (their hunger fled)
Sigh for their friends devour'd, and mourn the dead.
Nor cease the tears, till each in slumber shares 365
A sweet forgetfulness of human cares.

Now far the night advanc'd her gloomy reign
And setting stars roll'd down the azure plain :
When, at the voice of Jove, wild whirlwinds rise,
And clouds and double darkness veil the skies ; 370
The moon, the stars, the bright etherial host
Seem as extinct, and all their splendours lost ;
The furious tempest roars with dreadful sound ;
Air thunders, rolls the ocean, groans the ground.
All night it rag'd : when morning rose, to land 375
We haul'd our bark, and moor'd it on the strand,
Where in a beauteous grotto's cool recess
Dance the green Nereides of the neighb'ring seas.

There, while the wild winds whistled o'er the main,
Thus careful I address the list'ning train. 380

O friends be wise ! nor dare the flocks destroy
Of these fair pastures : if ye touch, ye die.
Warn'd by the high command of heav'n, be aw'd ;
Holy the flocks, and dreadful is the god !
That god who spreads the radiant beams of light, 385
And views wide earth and heav'n's unmeasur'd height.

And now the moon had run her monthly round,
The south-east blust'ring with a dreadful sound ;
Unhurt the beeves, untouch'd the woolly train
Low thro' the grove, or range the flow'ry plain : 390
Then fail'd our food ; then fish we make our prey,
Or fowl that screaming haunt the watry way.

Till now from sea or flood no succour found,
Famine and meagre want besieg'd us round,
Pensive and pale from grove to grove I stray'd, 395
From the loud storms to find a sylvan shade ;
There o'er my hands the living wave I pour ;
And heav'n and heav'n's immortal thrones adore,
To calm the roarings of the stormy main,
And grant me peaceful to my realms again. 400
Then o'er my eyes the gods soft slumber shed,
While thus Eurylochus arising said,
O friends, a thousand ways frail mortals lead.
To the cold tomb, and dreadful all to tread ;
But dreadful most, when by a slow decay 405
Pale hunger wastes the manly strength away.
Why cease ye then t' implore the pow'rs above,
And offer hecatombs to thund'ring Jove ?
Why seize ye not yon beeves and fleecy prey ?
Arise unanimous ; arise and slay ! 410
And if the gods ordain a safe return,
To Phœbus shrines shall rise and altars burn.
But should the pow'rs that o'er mankind preside
Decree to plunge us in the whelming tide,
Better to rush at once to shades below 415
Than linger life away and nourish woe !
Thus he ; the beeves around securely stray,
When swift to ruin they invade the prey ;
They seize, they kill ! —but for the rite divine
They barely fail'd, and, for libations, wine. 420
Swift from the oak they strip the shady pride :
And verdant leaves the flow'ry cake supply'd.
With pray'r they now address th' æthereal train,
Slay the selected beeves, and slay the slain :
The thighs, with fat involv'd, divide with art, 425
Strew'd o'er with morsels cut from ev'ry part.
Water instead of wine, is brought in urus,
And pour'd profanely as the victim burns.
The thighs thus offer'd, and the entrails drest,
They roast the fragments, and prepare the feast. 430
'Twas then soft slumber fled my troubled brain ;
Back to the bark I speed along the main.
When lo ! an odour from the feast exhales,
Spreads o'er the coast, and scents the tainted gales ;

A chilly fear congeal'd my vital blood, 435

And thus obtesting heav'n I mourn'd aloud.

O sire of men and gods, immortal Jove!

O all ye blissful pow'rs that reign above!

Why were my cares beguil'd in short repose?

O fatal slumber, paid with lasting woes! 440

A deed so dreadful all the gods alarms,

Vengeance is on the wing and heav'n in arms!

Mean time Lampetic mounts th' aerial way,

And kindles into rage the god of day?

Vengeance, ye pow'rs, (hecries), and thou whose hand

Aims the red bolt, and hurls the writhen brand! 446

Slain are those herds which I with pride survey,

When thro' the ports of heav'n I pour the day,

Or deep in ocean plunge the burning ray.

Vengeance, ye gods! or I the skies forego, 450

And bear the lamp of heav'n to shades below.

To whom the thund'ring pow'r; O source of day!

Whose radiant lamp adorns the azure way,

Still may thy beams thro' heav'n's bright portals raise,

The joy of earth, and glory of the skies; 455

Lo! my red arm I bare, my thunders guide,

To dash th' offenders in the whelming tide.

To fair Calypso, from the bright abodes,

Hermes convey'd these councils of the gods.

Meantime from man to man my tongue exclaims, 460

My wrath is kindled, and my soul in flames.

In vain! I view perform'd the direful deed,

Beeves, slain by heaps, along the ocean bleed.

Now heav'n gave signs of wrath, along the ground

Crept the raw hides, and with a bellowing sound 465

Roar'd the dead limbs; the burning entrails groan'd

Six guilty days my wretched mates employ

In impious feasting, and unhallow'd joy;

The seventh rose, and now the sire of gods

Rein'd the rough storms, and calm'd the tossing floods:

With speed the bark we climb; the spacious sails 471

Loos'd from the yards invite the impelling gales.

Past sight of shore, along the surge we bound:

And all above is sky, and ocean all around!

When lo! a murky cloud the thund'rer forms 475

Full o'er our heads, and blackens heav'n with storms.

Night dwells o'er all the deep : and now outflies
The gloomy west, and whistles in the skies.
The mountain billows roar ! the furious blast
Howls o'er the shroud, and rends it from the mast ;
The mast gives way, and, crackling as it bends, 481
Tears up the deck ; then all at once descends ;
'The pilot, by the tumbling ruin slain,
Dash'd from the helm, falls headlong to the main.
Then Jove in anger bids the thunder roll, 485
And forky lightnings flash from pole to pole ;
Fierce at our heads his deadly bolt he aims,
Red with uncommon wrath, and wrapt in flames :
Full on the bark it fell ; now high, now low,
Toss'd and retoss'd, it reel'd beneath the blow ; 490
At once into the main the crew it shook,
Sulphureous odours rose, and mould'ring smoke.
Like fowl that haunt the floods, they sink, they rise, }
Now lost, now seen, with shrieks and dreadful cries ; }
And strive to gain the bark ; but Jove denies. 495 }
Firm at the helm I stand, when fierce the main
Rush'd with dire noise, and dash'd the sides in twain ;
Again impetuous drove the furious blast,
Snapt the strong helm, and bore to sea the mast.
Firm to the mast with cords the helm I bind, 500 }
And ride aloft, to providence resign'd, }
Thro' tumbling billows, and a war of wind. }

Now sunk the west, and now a southern breeze,
More dreadful than the tempest, lash'd the seas ;
For on the rocks it bore where Scylla raves, 505
And dire Charybdis rolls her thund'ring waves.
All night I drove ; and, at the dawn of day,
Fast by the rocks beheld the desp'rate way :
Just when the sea within her gulfs subsides,
And in the roaring whirlpools rush the tides. 510
Swift from the float I vaulted with a bound,
The lofty fig-tree seiz'd and clung around ;
So to the beam the bat tenacious clings.
And pendant round it clasps his leathern wings.
High in the air the tree its boughs display'd, 515
And o'er the dungeon cast a dreadful shade.
All unsustain'd between the waves and sky,
Beneath my feet the whirling billows fly.

What time the judge forsakes the noisy bar
 To take repast, and stills the wordy war ; 520
 Charybdis rumbling from her inmost caves,
 The mast refunded on her reflux waves.
 Swift from the tree, the floating mast to gain,
 Sudden I dropp'd amidst the flashing main :
 Once more undaunted on the ruin rode, 525
 And oar'd with lab'ring arms along the flood,
 Unseen I pass'd by Scylla's dire abodes:
 So Jove decreed, (dread sire of men and gods.)
 'Then nine long days I plough'd the calmer seas,
 Heav'd by the surge, and wafted by the breeze. 530
 Weary and wet th' Ogygian shores I gain,
 When the tenth sun descended to the main.
 There in Calypso's ever-fragrant bow'rs
 Refresh'd I lay, and joy beguil'd the hours.
 My following fates to thee, oh king, are known, 535
 And the bright partner of thy royal throne.
 Enough : in misery can words avail ?
 And what so tedious as a twice-told tale !

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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